THE PSALTER

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Revised

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ORTHODOX PSALTER

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are among the most hauntingly beautiful songs and prayers that this world possesses. They are poems whose appeal is permanent and universal. As an anthology of 150 gems the Psalter is a work of consummate art, a thing of beauty which is a joy for ever ; its loveliness increases. ' The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express that same delight in God which made David dance' says the late C. S. Lewis.

The Bible is a presentation of the divine drama in which we are all taking part. The theme of the drama is the great acts and interventions of God, past, present and future. The Psalms are a distillation of the Old Testament and especially of the teaching of the Hebrew Prophets. They sum up the whole theology of the Old Testament. They are the quintessence of the faith and devotion of Israel. Yet they express the feelings and reactions not only of one nation but of all mankind. They reflect timelessly the universal hopes and fears, love and hate, joys and sorrows of the human heart. Individually they are the outcome of someone's personal experience, though not perhaps all of them. They reveal the varying moods of the human spirit from awestruck wonder at God's mighty acts and the marvels of creation to groping perplexity at the apparent prosperity of selfish scoundrels, from calm trust and deep certainty to cries of frustration and desperation bordering on despair. In these ancient poems we see the fundamental unity of mankind and of the Old and New Testaments. The unity is that of Promise and Fulfilment.

If the relic of a saint or loved one is dear to us, how much more precious is everything connected with Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life. The Psalter was both His Prayer Book and Song Book. While dying on the cross, the only portion of Holy Scripture that He quoted was the Psalter. Of His ' seven last words ', four of them are echoes from the Book of Psalms : ' My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ' (Ps. 21 : 2; Mt. 27 : 46; Mk. 15 : 34); ' I thirst ' (Jn. 19 : 28; Ps. 41 : 2; 62 : 2; 142 : 6); ' It is done, accomplished, finished ' (Ps. 21 : 32; Jn. 19 : 30); ' Into Thy hands I entrust My spirit ' (Ps. 30 : 6; Lk. 23 : 46).

Fullness and Fulfilment

We only realize the full significance of the Psalms as we read them in Christ the Truth, through His eyes, and in His Spirit. Faith is vision. Unbelief is blindness. 'If the good news is veiled, it is veiled only to those who have lost their way. When the Old Testament is read, a veil lies over their minds. Only in Christ is the veil removed. The minds of unbelievers are so blinded by the god of this world that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ cannot dawn upon them. God Who told light to shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 4-6). 'So let all Israel know for certain that God has made Jesus Whom you crucified both Lord and Messiah' (Acts 2:36).

Israel failed to respond to the divine call and commission to give God's light and love to the world. The vine lifted out of Egypt (Ps. 79:9; Mt. 2:15) is Jesus, the true Vine (Jn. 15). As the true Israel He fulfils Israel's mission, so that from the Cross and Resurrection the new and true Israel is the community of those whose hearts receive by faith the divine Word spoken in Him (Heb. 1:2). His life is offered that it may flow in our veins as the Blood of the New Covenant, 'the fruit of the vine' (Mk. 14:24), the love that conquers death (1 Cor. 15:54-57). When the risen Lord walked and talked with Luke and Cleopas, 'He began with Moses and all the Prophets, and explained to them the passages which referred to Himself in every part of the Scriptures.' At Emmaus He added, 'This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms was bound to be fulfilled' (Lk. 24:27, 44).

The songs of Israel find their full meaning only in the New Adam. The Psalmist's voice is his Master's voice. It was 'the Spirit of Christ in the Prophets foretelling the sufferings in store for Christ and the glories that would follow. And it was revealed to them that it was not for themselves but for you that they were administering those very mysteries which have now been announced to you through those who preached the Gospel to you in the power of the Holy Spirit' (1 Pet. 1:11). Christ's birth, sufferings and death, His triumphant resurrection and ascension, and His coming in judgment, are all clearly portrayed in the Psalms, not merely as historical events but as perpetual and saving realities. The eternal Spirit transforms history into theology. St. Athanasius the Great says that the line of the Psalmist, 'Open your mouth

wide and I will fill it' (80:11) refers to receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit is the fulfilment of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Correspondence and Recapitulation

The Christian Church accepted the Old Testament as sacred scriptures. The Apostles and Christian preachers and teachers cited passages of the Old Testament as prophecies of the events of the Gospel. They also saw correspondences between things and events under the old and new covenants. The Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law and the Covenant have their counterpart in the redemption of mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the giving of the new covenant in His blood (1 Cor. 11:25) and the new commandment which fulfils the law (Jn. 13:34; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:10). The temple at Jerusalem has its counterpart in the temple of the Church composed of living stones (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5). The heavenly manna has its counterpart in Jesus as the heavenly bread of life (Jn. 6:32-58). The creation of the earthly man has its counterpart in the new creation born in the death and resurrection of the Heavenly Man Who is the Lord from Heaven (Jn. 12:24; 1 Cor. 15:47-49; 2 Cor. 5:17). Adam, the head of a sinful race of mortals, has his counterpart in Christ, the second Adam, the New Man, the head of a race of immortals (1 Cor. 15:45-49). In all these ways the new covenant recapitulates the old covenant.

Similarly Christ was seen to be both priest and victim (Heb. 8:1—9:15). He is the sacrificial lamb and also the victorious king (Jn. 1:36; 18:37). He is the good Shepherd and also the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Ps. 22; Jn. 10:11; Rev. 5:5). He is the Son of Man foreseen by the Prophet Daniel (7:13, 14) destined to receive an eternal kingdom, and also the Son of God foreseen by the Prophet David (Ps. 2) destined to reign over all creation. Jesus fulfils the role of Israel by attaining the triumph of His kingdom and exaltation through humiliation and obedience to the point of death (Mk. 14:21; Heb. 2:5-9; Isaiah 53).

The Church also understood that Jesus was the Word (Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13). He was Himself the utterance of God's love and grace, light and truth in the world. The utterances of the Old Testament had been partial, incomplete, fragmentary, preparatory, prophetic. In Jesus we have the fullness and finality of the divine utterance. Jesus embodies the divine utterance both in His teaching and in Himself. The Word and the Person are completely identical. The Word Who became flesh (Jn. 1:14)

was in origin and originally God (Jn. 1:1), ever at work with the Father and the Spirit in the creation of the world (Jn. 5:17), ever giving life and light to men and angels (Jn. 1:9). And so we see that the Word is a Person. Life is not something but Someone (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21). The whole pageant of the past is recapitulated in the gracious personality of Jesus the Messiah. He recapitulates in His Person the whole destiny of mankind (Eph. 1:10). God has predestined men to become 'conformed to the image of His Son' (Rom. 8:29).

The Church and the Bible

Under both Old and New Covenants the Church preceded the Bible. The essential role of the Church, as of the individual Christian, is to bear witness to experience, to what has been seen and heard (Acts 1:8; 4:20; 22:15). Man's vocation and destiny are supernatural (Heb. 3:1; Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:2). Scripture is a communication of divine light to guide us in the way of perfection (Mt. 5:48). To know Christ (Truth) is to love Him and be free (1 Jn. 4). So a supernatural revelation of God's nature, will and purpose is essential. Such is the Word of God contained in the Bible. 'It is a love-letter written by our heavenly Father and transmitted by the sacred writers to the human race on our pilgrimage towards our heavenly country' (St. Chrysostom). Readers of the Bible have the Church to guide them. 'No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private interpretation, nor can it be understood by one's own powers. For no prophecy ever originated in the human will, but holy men of God spoke as they were prompted by the Holy Spirit' (2 Pet. 1:20). It is the Church's mission to interpret the Bible. People who live humbly and honestly in the fellowship of the Church have their minds conditioned and attuned to understand the scriptures as the revelation of the mind of God. (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:1)

The Nature of the Psalms

It would be a mistake to think that the Psalms are a beautiful expression of nature mysticism, inspired by the natural beauty of the countryside and the soothing sounds of softly murmuring streams. They are rather the war-songs of the Prince of Peace, the vigorous shouts and cries of the whole man, responding or reacting with his whole being to the One Who comes to him in all the circumstances of life. Jesus Himself tells us that we shall never see Him until we say in every situation, 'Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord' (Lk. 13:35). In this matter of

the sanctification of the total man made to love God with his whole nature (Lk. 10: 27), Israel was unlike the religions of the world. The New Israel, the Church of Christ, inherits and continues this tradition and should develop it in an even more thoroughgoing manner.

The Jews prayed and worshipped with spirit, soul and body. They beat their breasts, clapped their hands, stretched out their arms, fell prostrate on the ground ; they sang, they shouted, they danced ; they used drums, tambourines, cymbals, castanets, bells, horns, trumpets, pipes, and various stringed instruments. We find these features in the Psalms. St. Isaac the Syrian says, ' Every prayer in which the body does not participate and by which the heart is not affected should be reckoned as an abortion without a soul.'

Varieties of prayer are found in the Psalms : Worship and Bowing Down, Love and Adoration, Meditation and Contemplation, Stillness and Watching, Waiting and Listening, Hope and Desire, Acts of Faith and Trust, Praise and Blessing, Exaltation and Magnification, Repentance and Confession, Weeping and Groaning, Exultation and Thanksgiving, Joy and Gladness, Vows and Affirmations, Exorcism and Adjuration, Surrender and Submission, Petition and Intercession. We need to learn afresh the Christian use of the Psalter. One reason for the neglect of the Psalms in our devotional life is the disproportionate attention given to critical and historical research in modern biblical study, to the almost total exclusion of the vital meaning and purpose of the Word of God. ' To be ignorant of Scripture is not to know Christ ' says St. Jerome.

Practical Use of the Psalter

The Church never merely studied the Psalms. They were her chief book of devotion. Her divine Founder had quoted them, had used them in prayer, had explained them to His disciples, and had died with them on His lips. The Apostles ordered the faithful to use the Psalms both in their personal lives and in community worship (Jas. 5 : 13; Col. 3 : 16; Eph. 5 : 19). St. Jerome tells us that at St. Paula's funeral in 404, the Psalms were sung ' now in Greek, now in Latin, now in Syriac ; and this not only during the three days that elapsed before she was buried, but throughout the rest of the week.' He also says that the Psalms sung in churches were also sung in the fields : ' The toiling reaper sings Psalms as he works, and the vine-grower, as he prunes his vines, sings one of David's songs.'

At first the Psalter was the only hymnbook available. Many both of the clergy and laity knew it by heart. St. Germanus in Constantinople and St. Gregory in Rome refused to consecrate as bishops men who were unable to recite the Psalter. A disused canon so ruled. Even when the church services began to be compiled, the Psalter was the Church's first service book, and it retains that position to this day. All the services draw heavily upon the Psalms. The Psalter is a quarry and treasury of Christian prayer and devotion.

Poetic Characteristics

The Psalms are poetry and this version retains the original poetic form by printing the lines as in the Septuagint. Much is lost when the Psalms are printed as prose. Hebrew verse does not rhyme except occasionally and accidentally. It is based on what is called parallelism, and is mostly in the form of couplets. The second line of the couplet may be a repetition of the theme in different words, or a contrast, or a heightened emphasis. There is rhythm, but little metre. Often there is a play on words, or assonance, or alliteration, or some figure of speech. These are not reproducible in translation. But the parallelism is clearly retained. If the line endings occasionally rhyme, that is quite incidental as in the original Hebrew.

It must not be thought that the parallelism of Hebrew poetry merely means that the second line of every couplet simply repeats the thought of the first line in different words. Far from it. It may enrich or amplify the thought of the first line, or it may modify it in other ways. For example, the Prophet Isaiah writes (55:7):

> Let the wicked forsake his ways
> and the sinful man his thoughts.

Or take the opening words of that wonderful outburst of praise which the Holy Spirit put on Mary's lips (Luke 1:46):

> 'My soul magnifies the Lord
> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'

This does not mean that soul and spirit are therefore identical (cp. 1 Thess. 5:23). Rather it indicates that the second half of the couplet is a result of the first. With my soul I magnify the Lord (*soul* including understanding, intellect, memory, imagination, desire, will). As a result of my growing consciousness and realization of the greatness and goodness and glory of God, my spirit is filled with joy and I exult in God my Saviour. So the inspired lines are found to contain a simple technique for the praise of God.

Divergences

This new translation of the Psalter has been made primarily for use in the services of the Orthodox Church. It will be found to follow closely and often word for word previous versions made from the Hebrew. It will also be found to differ widely in many places. This is because the Orthodox Church is committed to the Septuagint version of the Bible, which was the Bible of the whole Christian Church during the first thousand years of its existence. It is also the version of the Bible that was used and quoted by our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles, though they also occasionally referred to the Hebrew. That is why it will be found that this version of the Psalms tallies in almost every instance with the Psalms quoted in the New Testament, whereas the Hebrew Psalms are often widely divergent. For example, Psalm 4:5, 'Be angry, yet do not sin', is quoted word for word by the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:26). The Hebrew gives quite a different reading.

If it is asked why the Septuagint often differs so totally from the Massoretic text, the answer probably is that Hebrew was a kind of shorthand, entirely without vowels when the Psalms were written. It is easy to see that a word like *brd* could be rendered bread, bird, bard, brayed, broad, beard, bored, breed, brood, braid, bride, bred, buried. It is not surprising that there are variant readings. What is surprising is that the Septuagint reproduces a vast amount of the Hebrew text almost verbatim, so that we can often check the Massoretic. Another reason for differences in the Septuagint may be that the Seventy translators used a Hebrew version that differed in many respects from the Massoretic text.

We cannot give footnotes to explain how we arrive at every puzzling rendering of the Greek, as it is not within our scope. If we take a single instance, it will be seen how lengthy and complicated such explanations could be. In Psalm 101:27, 'change them like clothing' could be rendered, 'role them like clothing'. Actually there is a variant reading at this point, some texts reading 'roll', others 'change'. As the thought suggested is that of a person rolling or stripping off a worn-out garment, we believe that the word *change* faithfully conveys the sense of either Greek word and also the meaning of the Hebrew original. In fact, the idea of change and renewal and the rebirth of the soul as a new creation is a basic concept throughout Holy Scripture (cp. Jn. 3:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10; 4:24).

Songs with a Difference

The Psalms provide food for the 'fed up' and heavenly bread in the wilderness. But what about the stone-age ethics? How does King Og aid our sanctification or help our prayer? In some of the Psalms we seem to be thirsting not for God but for our enemies' blood. Sometimes we seem to be howling war-cries with a tribe of savages. How can we speak the truth in love with Hebrew tribals who even sink to sacrificing their sons and daughters to demons? (105:37)

The purpose of God's written word of which the Psalms are a part is to make known to men the saving truths that God has revealed to us about Himself in His eternal Being and about His action in time and place and His plan for the new world order. Christian theology is essentially the knowledge of God and His will revealed to man through God's action in history, which is truly 'His story'. Orthodox theology as a unity of knowledge is a means to an end that transcends all knowledge. This end is union with God. The Psalms sum up the whole salvation history and theology of the Old Covenant. The lights and shadows of the total panorama are all here.

So the Psalms are unlike the sacred books of the world religions. The Bible is the record of the life of a community offered by the Church as divine revelation. We see the living God in the movement of events. It is not merely the history of a progressive revelation, but history as revelation. The meaning of the events lies in man's meeting with God. The prophet, like the priest, is a 'public person'. His encounter with God is not merely private experience, like that of the mystics and sages of the world religions. The pressure of public events is the normal occasion of the prophet's meeting with God. The truth which the encounter reveals to his mind is public property. God's choice of the prophet is not an act of favouritism, but an invitation or call to special responsibility (cp. Amos 3:2). The word of God which gives the vital meaning to history always has a twofold action: it is the word of crisis and judgment, and it is the creative word of renewal and regeneration. 'If anyone is in the Truth, there is a new creation' (cp. 2 Cor. 5:17). Judgment is followed by the 'new heavens and new earth' (2 Pet. 3:13), and the 'universal restoration of all things' (Acts 3:21). The light that judges us, transfigures and saves us (Jn. 12:47).

'In Thy light we see light' (Ps. 35:10). The supreme message of the Psalter is that the vision of God, to know and love Him, to

trust and obey Him, and to offer Him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is eternal life and happiness (Jn. 6:40; 17:3; Lk. 10:25-28; 1 Pet. 1:8f).

The Divine Initiative

The Psalms are the Bible in miniature. By a kind of divine tom-tom they drum into our consciousness the truth that we meet God in the world of persons, things and events. Here and now we are to pass through the visible and transient to the invisible and true. Yet the initiative always rests with God. The word of God comes out of the everywhere into the here, and breaks into our life from beyond us. The Bible is a record of God's search for man. The people of God are not those who have a special bent or natural genius for religion. Far from it. All the saints would agree that they had a natural bent for unbelief and waywardness, but for the grace of God. 'We love because He first loved us' (1 Jn. 4:19). 'When we were still sinners Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8). 'It was when we were sick and powerless to help ourselves. . . . when we were enemies that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son' (Rom. 5:6, 10). 'His was the first birth out of death' (Col. 1:18). Last but not least, the Psalms remind us of our response to God's love which means life from the dead. It is the response of obedient love and loving obedience. 'I love Thee, O Lord, my strength' (Ps. 17:1).

In the Psalms David speaks as if he were not going to die, as if God would not leave him in hell or allow him to see corruption (15:10). Yet David died and his kingdom vanished. Now hear the Apostle Peter at Pentecost: 'Men and brethren, I can speak freely to you about the Patriarch David: he died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. But being a prophet, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Christ, when he said that his soul would not be left in hell, nor would his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised to life, and we are all His witnesses' (Acts 2:29f). The Psalms were the utterances of both David and Christ. God Who spoke in David and Who became incarnate as the 'Son of David' was speaking of His own coming into visibility as the divine Messiah and of His plan of salvation. This plan is only fully revealed in its fulfilment, when men are filled with the Holy Spirit of God. The incarnation of the Word as the visible image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) is the supreme demonstration of the divine initiative and intervention. It is the

climax of God's search for man and the discovery and redemption of the lost image and likeness in the Saviour's death and resurrection.

The Messiah

A striking and mysterious figure looms larger and larger, and gradually takes shape, as we read and re-read the Psalms. He is the Son of God, appointed King on Zion to rule the nations (Ps. 2). He is addressed as God, His kingdom is to last for ever, His reign is gentle and just, yet strong as iron. He is lovely with a beauty beyond the sons of men, and because of His love of justice and goodness He has a joy surpassing His fellow men (Ps. 44). He is a King and Judge Who shares the throne of God. He is a Priest, not in the Levitical line, but an Eternal Priest-King like Melchizedek (Ps. 109). His reign will bring lasting peace and justice, all kings and nations will worship Him, He will take special care of the poor and destitute, and in Him all the families of the earth will be blessed (Ps. 71). Yet this Sovereign Ruler of nations Whom all mankind will worship will undergo terrible sufferings, will be treated as an outcast, a worm and not a man, will endure outrageous handling by men who have become more like wild beasts: bulls, lions and dogs. And they will strip Him and pierce His hands and feet, and will then stand and gloat over Him (Ps. 21). Yet when He comes in judgment to claim His Kingdom, it will be a world-wide assembly, including rich and poor alike, who will all worship Him and partake of a sacrificial meal in His honour (Ps. 21, 93, 95). Such is the King Messiah, portrayed especially in 5 Messianic Psalms: 2, 21, 44, 71 and 109. They foretell the advent, kingdom, priesthood, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of the coming Redeemer. But different facets of the same face and person are sprinkled throughout the Psalter, and we need them all to get the full portrait.

Figures and Symbols

The Psalms foreshadow in figure and symbol the way of life and freedom fully revealed only in the New Adam (Rom. 5:12f., 1 Cor. 15:21 f.), the New Noah, father of the new race who rise from the baptismal waters (1 Pet. 3:20f.; 2 Pet. 2:5), the Prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18; Jn. 1:21, 46; 6:14, 32; Acts 3:22). So He explains the miracle of the bronze serpent which Moses fixed to a sign-post or standard and which brought a change of heart (Num. 21:9): ' As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that who-

ever believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life' (Jn. 3:14).

But the crucial and decisive event of the old covenant history was the Exodus from Egypt, which the Psalms mention so frequently. Just as the Christian remembers and re-lives the sacrifice of Christ by the celebration of the Liturgy, so the Jew recalls and re-enacts the Exodus by the celebration of the Passover. This act of worship is not just an escape from the present into the past, but a means of actual experience. The Passover ritual says: 'In every generation it is a man's duty to imagine that he himself has escaped from Egypt (cp. Ex. 13:8).

As Moses led the Hebrew slaves out of Egyptian bondage through the Red Sea towards the Promised Land and celebrated their escape or deliverance by the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, so Christ the true Lamb of God by His sacrifice on the cross leads men through the red sea of His life-giving blood out of the real slavery of sin into the glorious freedom of the children of God, which is heaven on earth or the Promised Land. The great theme of history is the conflict between belief and unbelief. Human societies like human beings live by faith and die when faith dies (Rom. 1:17; Jas. 2:20). Faith is the light in which we see God. As we grow in faith and love, the mystery and unity of the Exodus and Christ's Passover becomes more and more a matter of personal experience. Yet the experience is not the essential reality, but only an effect of the reality which is infinitely beyond experience, namely God in us: 'Christ in you' (Col. 1).

By faith in Christ (Jn. 5:24) and by the new birth (Jn. 3:3-5) we enter a new dimension of life and become amphibians, living at once in time and eternity. We are at the same time in the wilderness and in the Promised Land. 'Our life is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20). 'God has enthroned us with Christ in heaven' (Eph. 2:6). The Songs of Zion will tell us again and again that by faith we are Christ's body in this world (1 Cor. 12:27) and that He lives in us (Col. 1:27; 2:6; Gal. 2:20). 'Be what you are!' they keep saying. 'Be forgiven, be reconciled, be friends with God, be clean, be free, be filled with the Spirit, be whole, be holy, be children of God, be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven!' (Phil. 3:20)

Some Difficulties

Some people object to parts of the Psalms because they seem to contradict the divine law of love taught by Christ. But the mystery of the divine wrath and vengeance reveals the total incompatibility of evil with the divine nature. 'You who love the

Lord, hate evil' (Ps. 96:10; Rom. 12:9). Judgment and vengeance belong to God and must be left to Him (Dt. 32:35). God's judgment is His appearance, manifestation, epiphany (Pss. 49: 1-4; 79:2; 93:1). In its fullness this appearing or manifestation refers to the incarnation, when Christ becomes the visible criterion in Whose light we see light (Ps. 35:10). All the evil and malice of the world culminates in the crucifixion of Christ. When vengeance is left to God, it takes the form of the agony and death of the God-man. God takes His own medicine. With Christ we are to hate the reign of evil, the vile spirits and passions that prevent the reign of Christ in our hearts and in the world. As we hate and forsake sin, we become free to love and pray and labour for God's reign and rule on earth.

Spiritual things must be spiritually understood. People contrast spirit and letter. But what 'letter' is there in the Word of God Who says Himself, 'My words are spirit and life' (Jn. 6: 63)? Truly 'the letter kills' (2 Cor. 3:6). To a literalist the message and meaning of the Bible is bound to elude his most meticulous search. The resident aliens whom God's people are to drive out of Canaan are the enemies of the human soul. The harsh psalms are the strong weapons used by the Church to exorcize and drive out evil spirits from the souls and bodies of men. 'The weapons of our warfare are not material, but are powerful with God for the overthrow of the enemy's strongholds' (2 Cor. 10:4). The Word of God which is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17) is given us to expel evil and idle thoughts and replace them by the divine light of the beauty of holiness and truth. 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly' (Col. 3:16).

Other people object that they cannot sincerely say with some of the Psalms that they are blameless, innocent, faithful, holy; it seems hypocritical. Still others say that they do not share the agony and suffering of the Psalmist, that their knees are not weak from fasting, and how can they give thanks for joys and victories they have never experienced? The trouble with all these people is that they have lost the sense of solidarity and unity with all mankind in Christ, still less do they have a sense of the unity of all being in God.

After Pentecost when the Spirit restored men to unity, we read, 'The whole body of believers had one heart and soul, and none of them called any of his possessions his own, but everything was shared as common property' (Acts 4:32). We cannot repeat too often that the Psalms refer to Christ and can be applied fully only to Him. But it is 'Christ in you Who is the hope of glory'

for you (Col. 1:27). 'He ever lives to make intercession' in you, with you, for you (Heb. 7:25). The Psalms teach us to enlarge our hearts or consciousness to embrace all mankind. 'Remember those who suffer as if you shared their pain' (Heb. 13:3).

Today we hear much of the priesthood of the laity. The Psalms, if used aright, compel us to exercise our priesthood and act as the voice of all mankind in Christ, the one Mediator, Priest and Intercessor. We even act as the mouth of all dumb creation to thank and glorify God for His goodness. The Angels in heaven and all God's creatures are invited to join the divine praises. 'To Him Who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father, to Him be glory and triumph throughout endless ages' (Rev. 1:5). As we pray with and for all mankind, we get a vision of hidden realities visible only to the eyes of faith, and we actually begin to see God's new creation taking shape. 'When He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (1 Jn. 3:2). If we are faithful, God will keep us till the end. So St Athanasius explains Psalm 93:14 thus: 'The Lord will guard His people in their troubles and afflictions, and He will direct and guide them *until His justice returns in judgment*, that is, until Christ judges the world; for *God has made Him our wisdom, our righteousness, our holiness and our redemption*' (1 Cor. 1:30). But disobedience always incurs God's Judgment (Jer. 44).

The Cross is the Key

Og, Sehon, Pharaoh are so many troubles and trials. There is plenty of suffering and misery on earth (2 Tim. 3:12). We make use of it aright when we offer it in union with the sufferings of Christ. In union with Christ our sufferings assume infinite redemptive value, just as a drop of water thrown into a great river does all that the river does (Col. 1:24). In this way our sufferings are transformed into light and power and joy. We find true happiness by dying because we can only enter heaven by dying to earthly things (Acts 14:22). That is why the cross is the key to the Psalms, as it is the key to the Kingdom. 'Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone,' merely a grain of wheat (Jn. 12:24). It is when Christ is lifted up that He draws all to Himself into the unity of the Spirit. It is by dying that Jesus has drawn all into the triumph of His Resurrection. So Caiaphas prophesied that 'Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to reunite into one family the scattered children of God' (Jn. 11:51, 52).

Importance of the Psalter

All the Psalms have as their aim the glorification of God. They were sung in the Temple, in the Synagogues, and in Jewish homes. Today they are used by both Jews and Christians, uniting us in praise. The Psalter is the hymnbook of the universal Church. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Book of Psalms. The Hebrew poets took these timeless religious experiences and made them the theme of their songs. The Psalms are poems intended to be sung. The Hebrew title means 'Songs of Praise.' But they can be read with a song in the heart, they can be prayed in spirit and truth. The inspired poets of Israel reflect the spiritual experience of the human soul. So the Psalms belong to all mankind. As there is no book in the New Testament corresponding to the Book of Psalms, the Psalter belongs to both the New and Old Covenants and forms a bridge linking the Old and New Testaments. It is eloquent proof of the unity of the Bible. The Psalms constitute one of the most vital forms of prayer for men of all time. Their inspiration is expressly stated (2 Sam. 23:1-5).

'At the time when the Psalms were written they were not of such use to those among whom they were written as they are to us, for they were written to foretell the New Covenant among those who lived under the Old Covenant' (St. Augustine). The one great theme is Christ in regard to His inner life as the God-man and in His past, present and future relations with the Church and the world. The Psalter is the expression of the heart of the true man. It is the prophetic portrait of the mind and heart of the coming Saviour. God speaks to men in human words. What wonderful beauty there is in the words, 'Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice' (140), when applied to the one great sacrifice of our Redemption which was offered in the evening of the world and on the eve of the Passover by the stretching out of the Saviour's hands to embrace all mankind on the Cross! This we sing daily at Vespers. What profound significance we can see in the words, 'I will not die but live and proclaim the works of the Lord' (117:17), when we refer them to the morning of the Resurrection and that first Easter Day, and the commission to the Apostles to make disciples of all nations! This we sing daily at Matins. On Easter Day itself we sing, 'This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it' (117:24). And every day is the new day fresh from the hand of the living God, 'so let us keep festival' (1 Cor. 5:8).

Inspiration

The inspiration of the Psalms as an integral part of inspired Scripture is vouched for and guaranteed by Christ the Truth, Who asked the Pharisees: 'How is it that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Christ Lord, saying, (Ps. 109:1).

> The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand
> till I put Thy enemies under Thy feet."

If David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?' (Mt. 22: 43-45). Christ classes the Psalms, the chief book of the chetubim or hagiographa, with 'the Law and the Prophets' (Lk. 24: 44). Inspiration is explicitly defined in 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

Date and Authorship

The title of Psalm 89 attributes it to Moses. The psalm itself recalls how the first generation of Israelites were doomed to die in the wilderness for their infidelity and disobedience. So about 1280 B.C. some of the Psalms were probably being sung. The titles ascribe 84 of the 150 to David, who lived about 1000 B.C. So the earliest of the Psalms are well over 3000 years old, and the compilation covered perhaps 1000 years. There are indications of editing at different dates. For instance, after Psalm 71 an editor has added: 'The songs of David the son of Jesse are ended.' But later we meet more Psalms attributed to David, evidently inserted by other editors (90, 92, 93 etc.). The Book of Psalms was perhaps completed for the Jewish canon by about 300 B.C. The Greek translation was made in Egypt about 250 B.C. by Jews of the dispersion.

We cannot summarize the matter of authorship better than by quoting the words of St. Gregory the Dialogist: 'Who was the author? A very useless question as soon as we believe that the book was the work of the Holy Spirit Who dictated what was to be written. If we received a letter from a great personage, would we be curious to know what pen he used to write it?'

Historical Coverage

Besides studying the past, we can sing songs about it. That is what the Psalmists did. The whole history of the world as recorded in the Old Testament, from the creation of the universe till after the Babylonian Exile, is put into poetry by the Psalmists. Psalm 136 looks back to the Babylonian Exile as a thing of the past (cp. also Ps. 125).

Unity and Divisions

The Psalms form a single book. So our Lord refers to them (Lk. 20:42), and so do His Apostles (Acts 1:20). The Orthodox Church has divided the Psalter into 20 *kathismas* or sessions (perhaps because it is customary to sit during the reading of a *kathisma*). Each *kathisma* is further divided into 3 sections, marked by a 'Glory'. At each 'Glory' it is customary to stand and sing as follows:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Effect of the Psalms

People talk of haunted houses. The Psalter is a house of prayer haunted by the Spirit of Christ Who inspired the Psalms. Used aright, they cannot fail to lift us above and beyond ourselves. They confront us with God and we find ourselves haunted by His presence and gradually brought face to face with Him. They bring our hearts and minds into the presence of the living God. They fill our minds with His truth in order to unite us with His love. The saints and fathers of the Church, like the patriarchs and prophets of Israel, were haunted by the living reality of the Redeemer revealed to the world in the Psalter. He is the Word of God hidden in these 'words of God'. As you persevere in praying the Psalms, you will be drenched with the Holy Spirit as the trees are drenched with the rain (Ps. 103:16), you will be rapt in God and penetrated from time to time with vivid intuitions of His action, your mind and heart will be purified. The pure in heart know God as the Father of mercies Who has so loved the world as to give His only Son for their redemption (Jn. 3:16), and they see Him making all things new (Rev. 21:5). They see and know Him not merely by faith, still less by speculation, but by interior and incommunicable experience. As we sing His glories, we are led by faith to see His vast activity in every aspect of life. 'By beholding the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into His likeness from glory to glory by the Spirit of God' (2 Cor. 3:18).

But this will only happen if we see Christ as the way, the truth and the life of the Psalms (Jn. 14:6), the great God in Whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). As we persevere in seeking His face, we find that the Psalms stir and arouse in us the will to believe and the will to love. By faith and love we pass into the realm of eternal reality, and new vistas of experience open before us (Jn. 5:24).

The Voice and The Voices

The Church functions as a voice. Its ministers are 'servants of the word' (Lk. 1:2). The word of life was made visible. Life is a Person. The eternal life that was with the Father was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may share our fellowship, the life we share with the Father and His Son in the unity of the Spirit, that our joy may be complete (1 Jn. 1:1-4). 'In one who is obedient to His word, the divine love has indeed reached perfection' (1 Jn. 2:5).

In the Psalms many voices are audible. Sometimes it is the Psalmist who speaks, sometimes a fool, sometimes Israel, sometimes the soul, sometimes evil spirits, sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Spirit. Sometimes the Messiah seems to be identified with Israel, as in the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. With these swift transitions, it is often difficult at first sight to tell who is the speaker. As in the Psalms, so it is in our lives. 'Be still and know I am' (Ps. 45:11). 'Speak Lord, for Thy servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:9). The good Shepherd says, 'My sheep hear My voice' (Jn. 10:27). The voice of the Psalmist is the voice of Christ. The voice of the bride is the voice of the Bridegroom. 'He who hears you, hears Me' (Lk. 10:16).

'And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come". And let everyone who hears say, "Come". And let everyone who is thirsty come, and let everyone who has the will to do so take the water of life as a free gift' (Rev. 22:17). Here the Spirit of God and the Church with one voice invite every living soul to come to the only fountain of life and happiness. Then every listening soul is told to cry out of the depths of his hunger and need, 'Come!' Finally the thirsty and needy and willing are told to come and receive the water of life freely.

Here we have two comings: the final coming of Christ to the world and the coming of each soul to Christ. In fact, Christ comes to us continually in all the changes and chances of our lives, supremely in the mystery of communion (1 Cor. 11:23-

30; Jn. 6:31-58), and in many special manifestations of His real presence (Jn. 14:19-23). The Psalms tell us that we cannot find satisfaction in sin or work or riches or culture or honour and glory. But in Jesus we find here and now satisfaction and happiness, pardon, purity and peace: 'Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Christ), for they will be satisfied' (Mt. 5:6). Pardon: 'In Him we have the forgiveness of our sins' (Eph. 1:7). Purity: 'He has washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Rev. 1:5). Peace: 'My peace I give you' (Jn. 14:27). 'He is our peace' (Eph. 2:14).

And so we watch in eager expectation for the coming of the Son of God in power and glory, praying and working for that golden age foreseen and foretold by the holy Prophets where God's will of perfect love is done on earth as it is in heaven. Let us take as our motto the words of the Psalmist: 'I will live to please the Lord in the land of the living' (Ps. 114:9), the Promised Land, 'the honeycomb of the earth' (Ez. 20:6 LXX), 'peace beyond all understanding' (Phil. 4:7), 'the joy of the Lord' (Mt. 25:23), 'heaven within you' (Lk. 17:21), divine life in the soul of man (2 Cor. 5:15), sharing the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). 'He who has the Son has the life' (1 Jn. 5:12). 'Come, Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22:20).

Extract from St. John Chrysostom's Panegyric on the Psalms

'If we keep vigil in church, David comes first, last and central. If early in the morning we want songs and hymns, first, last and central is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of those who have fallen asleep, or if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last and central. O amazing wonder! Many who have made little progress in literature know the Psalter by heart. Nor is it only in cities and churches that David is famous; in the village market, in the desert, and in uninhabitable land, he excites the praise of God. In monasteries, among those holy choirs of angelic armies, David is first, last and central. In the convents of virgins, where are the communities of those who imitate Mary; in the deserts where there are men crucified to the world, who live their life in heaven with God, David is first, last and central. All other men at night are overcome by sleep. David alone is active, and gathering the servants of God into seraphic bands, he turns earth into heaven, and converts men into angels.'

The numbering of the Psalms

Greek	1-8	=	Hebrew	1-8
	9	=		9 and 10
	10-112	=		11-113
	113	=		114 and 115
	114-115	=		116
	116-145	=		117-146
	146-147	=		147
	148-150	=		148-150

From this table it will be seen that for most of the Psalms the Greek numbering is one behind that of the Hebrew.

KATHISMA 1

PSALM 1

The Two Ways : Tree or Dust

1 Blessed is the man
who never goes by the advice of the godless,
who never loiters in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the destructive,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who reflects on His law day and night.
3 He is like a tree that is planted
beside the flowing waters,
that yields its fruit in due season
and whose leaves do not fall;
and all that he does prospers.
4 Not so the godless, not so!
No, they are like dust
which the wind hurls from the face of the earth.
5 So the godless will not rise at the judgment,
nor sinners at the gathering of the righteous.
6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,[1]
but the way of the godless is doomed.

PSALM 2

The Messianic Drama : Warnings to Rulers and Nations

1 Why do the nations rage,
and the peoples cherish vain dreams ?[2]
2 The kings of the earth take their stand
and its rulers join forces together
against the Lord and against His Christ.
3 ' Let us break their bonds asunder
and throw off their yoke from us.'

[1] ' Not to be known by God spells death. . . . With God to know is to love, so that knowledge partakes of being ; to be unknown is to cease to exist ' (St. Augustine). cp. Habakkuk 1 : 13 ; 1 Cor. 8 : 3 ; 13 : 2 ; Mt. 7 : 23.

[2] ' An allusion to our Lord's persecutors mentioned in Acts 4 : 26 ' (St. Augustine).

4 He Who dwells in heaven will laugh at them;
the Lord will hold them in derision.
5 Then He will speak to them in His wrath,
and alarm them in His fury.
6 But I am appointed king by Him
over Zion, His holy mountain,[1]
7 Proclaiming the Lord's decree.
The Lord said to me, 'Thou art my Son.
Today I have begotten Thee.[2]
8 Ask of Me, and I will give Thee
the nations for Thy inheritance,
and the ends of the earth for Thy possession.
9 Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron,
and crush them like a potter's vessel.'[3]
10 And now, you kings, understand;
all you rulers of the earth, take warning.[4]
11 Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice in Him with trembling.
12 Embrace correction and discipline,
lest the Lord be angry,
and you perish through leaving the right way.
13 When His fury suddenly blazes out,
blessed are all who trust in Him.

PSALM 3

A Morning Prayer for Protection and Salvation

1 (*A Psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom*)
2 Lord, how many are those who trouble me!
How many are rising up against me!
3 How many are saying of my soul:
'There is no salvation for him in his God.' (*Pause*)[5]

[1] 'If Zion denotes contemplation, we can apply it to nothing more aptly than the Church whose members are urged to rise daily to the contemplation of God's glory: *We all beholding the glory of the Lord*' (St. Augustine. cp. 2 Cor. 3 : 18).

[2] 'In this phrase orthodox catholic belief proclaims the eternal generation of the Power and Wisdom of God Who is the only-begotten Son of God' (St. Augustine). Also Resurrection = new birthday (Acts 13 : 33).

[3] Revelation 2 : 27 ; 12 : 5 ; 19 : 15. The rod of iron is the Roman rule, the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2 : 40 (St. Theodoret). Also means laws of nature.

[4] 'rulers': *or*, judges. Judges and rulers were identical in Hebrew thought.

[5] Pause a moment and give that a little thought.

4 But Thou, O Lord, art my protector,
my glory, and the lifter up of my head.
5 I cry to the Lord with my voice,
and He answers me from His holy mountain. (*Pause*)
6 I lie down to rest and I sleep,
I awake and rise, for the Lord sustains me.
7 I will not be afraid of myriads of people
ranged on every side against me.
8 Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God.
For Thou strikest all who vainly oppose me;
Thou breakest the teeth of sinners.
9 Salvation belongs to the Lord,
and Thy blessing is upon Thy people.

Glory....

PSALM 4

An Evening Prayer of Trust in God
The Sacrifice of Rightcousness

1 (*With harps. A Song of David*)

2 Thou hearest me when I call,
O God of my righteousness;
Thou enlargest me in trouble.
Have mercy on me,
and hear my prayer.
3 Sons of men, how long will you be heavy-hearted?[1]
Why do you love vanity and seek falsehood? (*Pause*)
4 Know also that the Lord has made His Holy One wonderful;
the Lord will hear me when I cry to Him.
5 Be angry, yet do not sin;[2]
for what you say in your hearts
feel compunction on your beds.[3] (*Pause*)
6 Offer the sacrifice of righteousness,[4]
and put your trust in the Lord.

[1] 'heavy-hearted': weighed down with earthly cares, instead of rising to divine contemplation (St. John Chrysostom. cp. Lk. 21:34).

[2] Ephes. 4:26. Be angry at sin, but love the sinner. 'If you do give way to anger, lead it into silence with silent compunction of heart' (St. Athanasius the Great).

[3] 'This relates to the widening of the heart required to receive the inpouring of love through the Holy Spirit' (St. Augustine).

[4] 'Obtain righteousness, do righteousness, and offer it in sacrifice to God' (St. Athanasius). See also Ps. 16:1, 30:2 and footnotes there.

7 There are many who say, 'Who will show us good times?'
The light of Thy presence has been signed upon us, O Lord.
8 Thou hast given my heart more gladness
than fills men at the harvest of their wheat, wine and oil.
9 In peace with Him I will rest and sleep;[1]
for Thou, Lord, enablest me to live trustfully alone.[2]

PSALM 5

A Morning Prayer for Guidance
The Joy of Life Indwelt by God

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 Give ear to my words, O lord,
consider my cry.
3 Attend to the voice of my prayer,
my King and my God.
For to Thee I will pray, O Lord.
4 Thou wilt hear my voice in the morning.
In the morning I will stand before Thee
and Thou wilt visit and watch over me.
5 For Thou art not a God Who wills iniquity;
evil living cannot dwell with Thee.
6 The violent will not remain before Thine eyes.
Thou hatest all whose work is sin.
7 Thou wilt destroy all who tell lies;
the Lord abhors a bloody and deceitful man.
8 But as for me, in Thy abundant mercy
I will enter Thy house;
and in the fear of Thee
I will bow down towards Thy holy temple.
9 Guide me, O Lord, in Thy justice;
direct my way before Thee because of my enemies.
10 For there is no truth in their mouth;
their heart is vain.
Their throat is a yawning tomb;
with their tongues they deceive.
11 Judge them, O God.
Let them fall through their own thoughts;
for their wanton wickedness cast them out,
for they provoke Thee, O Lord.

[1] Or: I rest in peace and fall asleep at once.
[2] Following the Ethiopian version, which is based on the Septuagint.

12 But let all who trust in Thee be glad in Thee.
They will rejoice for ever
and Thou wilt dwell in them.[1]
All who love Thy name will glory in Thee.
13 For Thou wilt bless a righteous person, O Lord;
Thou hast crowned us with goodwill as with a shield.

PSALM 6

A Cry in Anguish of Body and Soul
Faith Receives the Answer to Prayer

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 O Lord, rebuke me, but not in Thine anger;
and chasten me, but not in Thy wrath.[2]
3 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak,
heal me, O Lord, for my bones shake.
4 My soul also is troubled exceedingly.
But Thou, O Lord, how long?[3]
5 Return, O Lord, deliver my soul;
save me for Thy mercy's sake.
6 For in death no one remembers Thee,
and who will confess Thee in hell?
7 I am weary and worn with my groaning.
Every night I bathe my bed
and sprinkle my couch with my tears.
8 My eye is troubled with anger;
I grow old among all my enemies.
9 Depart from me, all you who do evil,[4]
for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.
10 The Lord has heard my petition,
the Lord has received my prayer.
11 May all my enemies be ashamed and deeply troubled;
may they soon be routed and utterly confounded.

Glory....

[1] cp. John 14:20, 23; 17: 23; Rom. 8:9, 11; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27; 1 John 3:24; Rev. 3:20; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16.
[2] cp. Psalm 37:2; Jeremiah 10:24.
[3] Meaning: 'But where art Thou, O Lord? How long am I to suffer?' cp. Rev. 6:10. 'How long, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, must it be before Thou wilt judge and punish the inhabitants of the earth for our blood?'
[4] cp. Mt. 7:23.

PSALM 7

God the Just Judge Strong and Patient
Evil is Self-Destructive

1 (*A Psalm by David which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite*)

2 O Lord my God, in Thee I put my trust;
save me from all who persecute me, and deliver me;
3 lest my enemy seize my soul like a lion,[1]
when there is no one to redeem or save me.
4 O Lord my God, if I have done wrong,
if there is guilt on my hands,
5 if I have repaid with evil those who wronged me,
let me fall empty[2] before my enemies,
6 let my enemy persecute my soul,
seize and trample my life into the earth,
and bury my glory in the dust. (*Pause*)[3]
7 Arise, O Lord, in Thy wrath;
be exalted in the utmost confines of Thy enemies.
Rise up, O Lord my God,
in defence of the law Thou Thyself hast enjoined,
8 and the congregation of peoples will gather round Thee.
And over it ascend on high.
9 The Lord will judge the peoples.
Judge me, O Lord,
according to my righteousness
and according to the innocence that is in me.
10 O let the evil of sinners come to an end;
but guide the righteous.
It is God Who tests hearts and minds.
11 The right help comes to me from God,
Who saves the upright of heart.
12 God is a just judge, strong and patient,
not inflicting vengeance every day.
13 If you do not return, He will polish His sword;
He has drawn His bow and made it ready,
14 and in it He has fitted the arrows of death;
He has forged His bolts for those who are burning.

[1] cp. 1 Pet. 5 : 8.
[2] Empties fall (Ephes. 5 : 18).
[3] *Pause* a while. Calmly think it over.

15 The sinner travails with wrongdoing;
He conceives trouble and gives birth to iniquity.
16 He has dug a pit and scooped it out,
and he will fall into the hole he has made.
17 His trouble will recoil on his head,
and his wrongdoing will crash on his crown.
18 I will give thanks to the Lord for His justice;
and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

PSALM 8

The Greatness of God and His Love for Men
The Greatness of Man[4] as God's Plenipotentiary

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 O Lord, our Lord,
how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth ![1]
For Thy majesty is exalted above the heavens.
3 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings
Thou hast perfected praise[2]
because of Thy enemies,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
4 When I behold the heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
the moon and stars which Thou hast poised,[3]
5 what is man that Thou rememberest him,
or a son of man that Thou visitest him?
6 Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels;
Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor,
7 Thou hast set him over the works of Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:[4]
8 all sheep and cattle,
and also the beasts of the plain;
9 the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea,
and the things that pass through the paths of the seas.
10 O Lord, our Lord,
how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth!

Glory . . . .

[1] 'By His name death is destroyed, demons are bound, heaven is revealed, the gates of paradise are opened, the Spirit is bestowed' (St. Chrysostom).
[2] Mt. 21 : 16.
[3] poised : *lit.* fixed.
[4] Heb. 2 : 6-8. The Sovereignty of the Son of Man (Messiah).

KATHISMA 2

PSALM 9

Praise of God's Just Government
Call to Make God Known to the Nations

(On the Mysteries of the Son. A Psalm by David)

2 I will thank Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Thy wonders.
3 I will be glad and exult in Thee;
I will sing to Thy name, O Most High.
4 When my enemy is put to flight,
my foes weaken and perish from Thy presence.
5 Thou upholdest my cause and my right,
sitting enthroned, judging justly.
6 Thou hast rebuked the nations,
and the wicked one has perished;[1]
Thou hast wiped out his name for all eternity.
7 The enemy's swords have utterly failed,
and Thou hast destroyed their cities;
their memory with their din has perished.
8 But the Lord continues for ever;
He has prepared His throne for judgment.
9 He will judge the world with justice;
He will judge the peoples rightly.
10 The Lord is the poor man's refuge,
is helper in times of trouble.
11 Let those who know Thy name put their trust in Thee,
for Thou hast never failed those who seek Thee, O Lord.
12 Sing to the Lord Who dwells in Zion,
declare His ways among the nations.
13 As the avenger of blood He remembers them;
He does not forget the prayer of the poor.
14 Have mercy on me, O Lord;
see how my foes humiliate me,
O Thou Who liftest me from the gates of death,
15 that I may tell of all Thy praises
in the gates of the daughter of Zion.
I will rejoice in Thy salvation.

[1] 'This refers to the coming destruction of the devil' (St. Athanasius the Great).

16 The nations are stuck in the rot they have made;[1]
in this trap which they hid is their own foot caught.[2]
17 The Lord is known by the judgments He makes;
the sinner is caught in the works of his own hands.
18 Let the sinners be turned into hell,
all the nations that forget God.
19 For the poor man will not always be forgotten;
the patience of the needy will never perish.
20 Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail!
Let the nations be judged in Thy presence.
21 Set a lawgiver over them, O Lord;
let the nations know they are only men. (*Pause*)

(*Psalm* 10 *according to the Hebrew*)

22 Why stand away far off, O Lord?
Why disregard us in times of trouble?
23 At the pride of the godless, the poor man burns;
they are caught in the schemes they have planned.
24 For the sinner boasts of the desires of his soul,
and he who does wrong is praised for it.
25 The sinner provokes the Lord;
in his great anger he will not seek Him.
God is not before his eyes.
26 His ways are always defiled;
Thy judgments are far above his head.
He domineers over all his enemies.
27 For he says in his heart: 'I shall never be shaken;
no harm will ever come to me.'
28 His mouth is full of cursing, gall and deceit;
under his tongue are trouble and pain.
29 He sits in ambush with the rich
in secret places to kill an innocent man;
his eyes are fixed on the poor man.

[1] 'While eager to butcher bodies they were inflicting death on their own souls' (St. Augustine).

[2] 'The foot typifies the soul's affection, which when depraved is termed lust or cupidity, but when upright is love or charity. Love is the magnet which draws the soul towards its goal. When sinners try to set their affection on God, they suffer as they would in trying to free their foot from a fetter. So they prefer not to sever themselves from their pleasures' (*ibid*).

30 He lurks in secret like a lion in his den;
he lurks to make a prey of the poor,
to make a prey of a poor man by drawing him in.
31 In his trap he will humble him.
He stoops and falls in getting the poor into his power.
32 For he says in his heart: 'God has forgotten.
He has turned away His face, so He will never see.'
33 Arise, O Lord God, let Thy hand be uplifted,
forget not the poor.
34 Why does the wicked man provoke God?
Because he says in his heart: 'He will not look into it.'
35 But Thou seest, for Thou beholdest pain and passion[1]
that Thou mayest take them into Thy hands.
The poor man is left to Thee.
Thou art the helper of the orphan.
36 Break the power of the sinner and the evil one;
his sin will be sought, and will not be found.
37 The Lord will reign for ever and ever;
you nations will perish from His land.
38 O Lord, Thou hearest the desire of the poor,
Thy ear attends to their heart's disposition,
39 to judge the orphan and the humble man,
that no man on earth should continue to boast.

PSALM 10

An Act of Trust
The Sin-lover is a Self-hater
(A Psalm by David)

1 In the Lord I have put my trust.
How can you say to my soul:
Fly away like a bird to the mountains?
2 For, lo, the sinners bend their bow;
they have arrows ready in the quiver
to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.
3 They destroy what Thou art building.
But what has the just man done?
4 The Lord is in His holy temple[2]
the Lord Whose throne is in heaven,

[1] Pain and passion: *or*, trouble and anger.
[2] cp. 2 Cor. 6. 16; 1 Cor. 6: 19.

Whose eyes regard the poor,
Whose eyelids test the sons of men.
5 The Lord tests the just and the godless;
so he who loves wrongdoing hates his own soul.
6 Upon sinners He will rain snares;
fire and brimstone and a tempestuous wind
will be the portion of their cup.
7 For the Lord is righteous and loves righteousness;
His countenance beholds justice. *Glory . . . .*

PSALM 11

The Safety of the Poor and Needy
Faith in the Truth of God's Promises

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 Save me, O Lord, for there is no saint left;
for truths have dwindled from the sons of men.
3 Empty follies they talk, everyone with his neighbor;
with lying lips they speak evil with double heart.
4 May the Lord destroy all lying lips,
a tongue that boasts and those who say:
5 'We will make more of our tongue.
Our lips are our own.
Who is lord over us?'
6 'Because of the oppression of the needy
and the groaning of the poor,
now I will arise,' says the Lord;
'I will set him in safety and speak plainly in him.'[1]
7 The words of the Lord are pure words,
like silver refined by fire, purged of earth,
seven times purified.
8 Thou, O Lord, wilt keep us
and preserve us from this generation and for ever.
9 The godless prowl around;
from Thy height, great is Thy care of the sons of men.

PSALM 12

Progress of a Soul from Desolation to Exultation
My Heart Rejoices in Thy Salvation

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 How long, O Lord? Wilt Thou forget me for ever?
How long wilt Thou turn Thy face away from me?

[1] Cp. Mt. 10 : 19, 20; Luke 21 : 12-19.

3 How long must I make plans in my soul,
and have grief in my heart day and night?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?
4 Regard and hear me, O Lord my God;
enlighten my eyes lest I sleep in death,
5 lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him.'
Those who trouble me will rejoice if I am shaken.
6 But my trust is in Thy mercy;
my heart rejoices in Thy salvation.
7 I will sing to the Lord my benefactor,
and I will praise the name of the Lord Most High.

PSALM 13

Unbelief leads to Universal Corruption

1 *(A Psalm by David)*

The fool says in his heart: 'There is no God.'[1]
They are corrupt and abominable in their ways;
there is not one that does good, no not one.
2 The Lord looks through from heaven at the sons of men
to see if any understand or seek God.
3 All have strayed, one and all are depraved;
there is not one that does good, no not one.
4 Will they never learn, all the evildoers
who eat up my people like eating bread
and never call on the Lord?
5 They quail with fear where there is nothing to fear;
for God is with the righteous.
6 You would confound a poor man's plans,
but the Lord is his hope.
7 O that Israel's salvation would be granted from Zion!
When the Lord restores the captives of His people,
let Jacob rejoice and let Israel be glad.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 14

Life on the Mountain Tops

(A Psalm by David)

1 Lord, who can dwell in Thy sanctuary,
or who can rest upon Thy holy mountain?

[1] Psalm 13 differs only slightly from Psalm 52. cp. Romans 1 : 20-25.

2 He who lives a blameless life and does what is right
and speaks the truth from his heart;
3 who does not deceive with his tongue,
or do evil to his neighbor,
or accept reproach against his friends;
4 in whose sight evil-living is scorned,
but who honors those who fear the Lord;
who swears to his neighbor and keeps his word:
5 who does not lend his money at interest
or take bribes against the innocent.
6 He who does these things will never be shaken.

PSALM 15

The Vision and Presence of God is our Joy

(An inscription for a pillar. By David)

1 Keep me, O Lord, for my trust is in Thee.
2 I said to the Lord: 'Thou art my God;
Thou hast no need of my goods.'
3 To the saints who are in His land
the Lord has shown the wonder of all His will in them.
4 Their weaknesses were multiplied;
after that they made haste.
I will not enter their assemblies of blood,
nor will I mention their names with my lips.
5 The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup;
it is Thou Who restorest my inheritance to me.[1]
6 The lines have fallen for me in the best places;
for I have a most excellent heritage.
7 I will bless the Lord Who gives me wisdom,
so that even at night my heart instructs me.[2]
8 I see the Lord before me continually,
for He is beside me that I may not be shaken,
9 So my heart is glad and my tongue is exultant,
and even my flesh rests in hope.

[1] Salvation puts us in that state in which God's eternal life becomes ours, according to the normal right of succession to an inheritance (cp. Rom. 8 : 17, 'heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ').

[2] heart: *lit.* kidneys. The unconscious mind. cp. Psalm 138 : 13 and footnote.

10 For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,
not let Thy holy one see corruption.
11 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
Thou wilt fill me with joy by Thy presence.[1]
At[2] Thy right hand are eternal delights.

PSALM 16

Discipline leads to Vision
The Vision of God brings Likeness

(A Prayer of David)

1 Hear, O Lord, my righteousness;[3] attend to my need.
Give ear to my prayer from lips without deceit.
2 Let my judgment come from Thy presence;
let my eyes behold justice.
3 Thou hast proved and visited my heart in the night;
Thou hast tried me by fire
and hast found nothing wrong in me.
4 That my mouth may not speak of the doings of men,
for the sake of the words of Thy lips
I have kept hard ways.[4]
5 Direct my steps in Thy paths,
that my feet may not slip.
6 I have cried, O God, and Thou hast heard me;
incline Thine ear to me, and hear my words.
7 Show me the wonder of Thy mercy,
O Thou Who savest those who hope in Thee
from those who resist Thy right hand.
8 Keep me as the apple[5] of an eye.
Thou wilt hide me in the shadow of Thy wings
9 from the presence of the godless who oppress me.
My enemies surround my soul.
10 They have closed their heart;
their mouth speaks proudly.

[1] Verses 8-11b are quoted verbatim by St. Peter in Acts 2:25-28, and are explained in Acts 2:31. St. Paul quotes 1 verse, Acts 13:35 cp. Jn. 2:22.
[2] At: *or*, In.
[3] i.e. Hear Christ who intercedes on our behalf (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:34).
[4] cp. 2 Tim. 2:3, 12.
[5] apple: *or*, pupil. Enshrined in its tiny temple, the eye can shut out the cares and vanities of the world. It cannot bear the smallest speck of dust. So the Christian should hate the least stain of sin.

11 Those who cast me out have now surrounded me;[1]
they have set their eyes cast down to the earth.
12 They dog me like a lion eager for its prey,
and like a young lion lurking in ambush.
13 Arise, O Lord, forestall them and overthrow them;
deliver my soul from the godless,
Thy sword from the enemies of Thy hand.
14 O Lord, divide them in their life
from the few of the earth
and from Thy hidden treasures.
15 Thou hast filled their stomach,
they are satisfied with children,
and they leave the surplus to their babes.
16 As for me, may I in righteousness behold Thy face,
and be satisfied with beholding Thy glory.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 3

PSALM 17

Act of Love and Gratitude
Earth-Shaking Prayer

1 (*By David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul and from the hand of all his enemies; and he said:*)[2]
2 I love Thee, O Lord, my strength.
3 The Lord is my Support, my Refuge, and my Deliverer.
My God is my Helper, in Him I will trust;
my Protector, my Saviour, and my Defender.
4 With songs of praise I will call upon the Lord,
and I shall be saved from my enemies.
5 The pangs of death beleaguered me,[3]
and torrents of wickedness alarmed me.

[1] 'They cast Me out of their city and now surround Me on the cross' (St. Augustine).

[2] This Psalm, with slight variations, is also found in 2 Kings 22 (2 Samuel 22). It is a war-song of Christ the Warrior-King, fighting His way through a rebellious world with the weapons of His faith and love alone, until He comes into His Kingdom and gathers all to Himself.

[3] Cp. Acts 2 : 24.

6 The pangs of hell surrounded me,
and death-traps confronted me.
7 In my distress I called upon the Lord
and cried to my God.
He heard my voice from His holy temple,
and my cry before Him reached His ears.
8 Then the earth rocked and quaked,
and the mountains shook to their foundations
and rocked, because God was angry with them.
9 There went up a smoke in His wrath,
and fire burst into flame at His presence.
Coals were kindled by it.
10 And He bowed the heavens and came down,
and darkness is under His feet.
11 And He rode upon Cherubim and flew;
He swooped on the wings of the wind.
12 He made darkness His hiding-place.
As His canopy round Him
dark thunder-clouds hung in the sky.
13 From the brightness before Him
there broke through the clouds
hailstones and coals of fire.
14 Then the Lord thundered from heaven,
and the Most High let His voice be heard.[1]
15 He shot His arrows and scattered the foes;
He volleyed His lightnings and routed them.
16 Then the ocean beds were exposed,
and the foundations of the world were uncovered
at Thy rebuke, O Lord,
at the blast of the breath[2] of Thy wrath.
17 He reached from on high and took me;
He drew me out of many waters.
18 He will deliver me from my powerful enemies
and from those who hate me,
for they are too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my adversity,
but the Lord was my support.
20 And He brought me out into freedom;
He will deliver me because He delights in me.

[1] cp. Exodus 9 : 23.
[2] breath: *or* spirit cp. Acts 4 : 31 ; 12 : 5-12 ; 16 : 24-26.

21 The Lord will reward me according to my righteousness,
and according to the cleanness of my hands
He will recompense me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord
and have not turned profanely from my God.
23 For all His judgments are before me,
and His rights I have not forgotten.
24 I will be faultless with Him,
and will keep myself from my sin.
25 And the Lord will reward me according to my righteousness
and according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.
26 With a holy man, Thou art holy;
and with an innocent man Thou art innocent.
27 With the chosen Thou art chosen,
and with the twisted Thou wilt twist.[1]
28 For Thou dost save a humble people,
and dost humble the eyes of the proud.
29 For Thou wilt light my lamp, O Lord;
my God, Thou wilt enlighten my darkness.[2]
30 For in Thee I am delivered from temptation,
and through my God I can scale the wall.
31 As for my God, His way is perfect;
the words of the Lord are tried by fire;
He is the protector of all who trust in Him.
32 For who is God but the Lord,
and who is God but our God?
33 It is God Who girds me with strength,
and makes my way perfect.
34 He makes my feet like deer's feet,
and sets me on the heights.
35 He trains my hands for war.
And Thou hast made my arms like a bow of bronze.
36 Thou hast given me the defence of Thy salvation,
and Thy right hand has upheld me;
and Thy correction teaches me.
37 Thou hast stretched my strides beneath me,[3]
and my feet never falter.

[1] Twist and wrestle (Gen. 32 : 24). And he will untwist the twister and the twisted (144 : 15).

[2] Cp. Rev. 21 : 23.

[3] *or*, 'made room for (widened) my steps under me.' 'By removing snares and stumbling-blocks prepared by enemies, Thou hast cleared the way for me' (St. Athanasius).

38 I will pursue my enemies and overtake them;
and I will not turn back till they are destroyed.
39 I will crush them, and they will be unable to stand;
they will fall under my feet.
40 For Thou hast girded me with strength for battle,
and hast subdued under me all my aggressors.
41 And Thou hast forced my enemies to turn their backs to me,
and utterly destroyed those who hate me.
42 They cried for help, but there was none to save them;
they cried to the Lord, but He did not answer them.
43 I will thrash them like dust in the face of the wind,
I will pound them like mud in the streets.
44 Deliver me from this people's arguments.
Thou wilt set me at the head of nations.
A people I did not know have served me.
45 As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me.
But the strange children have proved false to Me.[1]
46 The strange children have grown old
and have limped from their paths.
47 May the Lord live and reign, and blessed be my God,
and may the God of my salvation be exalted;
48 the God Who sees that I am avenged,
and subdues peoples under me;
49 my deliverer from angry enemies.
Thou wilt lift me above my aggressors.
Thou wilt deliver me from vicious men.
50 Therefore I will give thanks to Thee
among the nations, O Lord,
and will sing praise to Thy name.[2]
51 Great is the salvation He grants to His King,
and the mercy He shows to His anointed,
to David and his Son for ever.[3]

Glory . . . .

[1] The strange children are the alienated Jews, whom Christ wished to make young through the New Covenant but who remained their old selves (Jn. 8:34-59).

[2] Rom. 15:9. Christ in David, Apostles, nations. (cp. Ps. 66:2-6).

[3] Son: *Lit.* seed. David's Son who inherits David's throne is Christ (Lk. 1:32, 33). 'Whatever words in this Psalm cannot be adapted to our Lord Himself as Head of the Church apply to the Church. For the words spoken are those of the whole Christ, of Christ united to His members' (St. Augustine).

PSALM 18

The Sun of Righteousness : His Works and Words Sweeter than Honey, More Precious than Gold

1 *(A Psalm by David)*

2 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament tells of the work of His hands.
3 Day to day breaks the news,
and night to night imparts knowledge.
4 There is no speech or spoken word,
and no sound of them is heard.
5 Yet their message goes out into all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.[1]
6 He has set His sanctuary in the sun;[2]
and He is like a bridegroom coming out of His canopy.
He exults like a giant to run His course.
7 From utmost heaven is his procession,
and till utmost heaven is his goal,
and from his heat no one can hide.
8 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting souls;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making children wise.
9 The Lord's rights are just, they rejoice the heart;
the Lord's commandment is clear, it enlightens the eyes.
10 The fear of the Lord is pure, it continues for ever;
the Lord's judgments are true, and entirely justified.
11 They are more desirable than gold
and most precious stone,
and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.[3]
12 Moreover thy servant keeps them,
and in keeping them there is great reward.
13 Who can know all his faults?
Cleanse me from my secret ones.[4]
14 And from strange gods spare Thy servant.[5]
If they have no dominion over me,
then I shall be blameless
and clear of grave sin.

[1] Rom. 10 : 18. [2] cp. Ps. 88 : 38. [3] cp. Ps. 118 : 72.

[4] 'As darkness blinds the eyes, so sins blind the soul and rob it of self-knowledge' (St. Augustine).

[5] Strange gods: *or* hostile spirits. Psalm 95 : 5 says all national and tribal gods are demons. 'Not only thoughts surround us, but hordes of demons also besiege us. He rightly calls them strange (gods), since they are malevolent aliens and enemies' (St. Athanasius).

15 Then the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
will be continually acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord, my Helper and my Redeemer.

PSALM 19

A Prayer for the King Offering His Sacrifice
We will Rejoice in Thy Salvation

1 (*A Psalm by David*)

2 May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.
3 May He send you help from the sanctuary,
and support you out of Zion.
4 May He remember all your sacrifice,
and accept your holocaust. (*Pause*)
5 May the Lord grant you your heart's desire
and fulfil all your will.
6 We will rejoice in Thy salvation
and triumph in the name of our God.
May the Lord fulfil all your petitions.
7 Now I know that the Lord has saved His Christ;[1]
He will hear Him from His holy heaven,
and with mighty acts show the salvation of His right hand.
8 Some trust in chariots and some in horses;
but we will triumph in the name of the Lord our God.
They were fettered and fell,
but we are risen and stand upright.
9 O Lord, save the king,
and hear us when we call upon Thee.

PSALM 20

God's Presence Fires Friends and Fries Enemies
We will Sing and Praise Thy Power

1 (*A Psalm by David*)

2 The king shall rejoice in Thy power, O Lord,
and exult greatly in Thy salvation.

[1] Christ: *or* Anointed. 'God saved Christ by raising Him from the dead' (St. Athanasius). cp. Acts 2 : 22-24; 3 : 15, 26; 5 : 30; 17 : 31; Rom. 8 : 11 &c.

3 Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
and hast not denied him the request of his lips. (*Pause*)
4 For Thou hast gone before him with the blessings of goodness;
Thou hast placed on his head a crown of precious stones.
5 He asked Thee for life, and Thou hast given him it;
length of days for ever and ever.
6 Great is his glory in Thy salvation;
Thou wilt confer on him glory and majesty.
7 For Thou wilt give him eternal blessing;
Thou wilt gladden him with the joy of Thy presence.[1]
8 For the king trusts in the Lord,
and in the mercy of the Most High he will not be shaken.
9 May all Thy enemies feel Thy hand;
may Thy right hand find all who hate Thee.
10 Thou wilt make them like a fiery oven
at the time of Thy presence,
The Lord will convulse them in His wrath,
and fire will devour them.
11 Thou wilt destroy their fruit from the earth,
and their race from the sons of men.
12 For they intended evil against Thee;
they devised plans which could never succeed.[2]
13 For Thou wilt put them to flight;
Thou shalt prepare Thy remnants against their faces.
14 Be exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength;
we will sing and praise Thy power. *Glory. . . .*

PSALM 21

The Great Shepherd Gives His Life for the Sheep
The Sufferings of Christ and the Redemption of the Nations

1 (*For the help of the Dawn.*[3] *A Psalm by David*)

2 O God, my God, attend to me;
why hast Thou forsaken me?[4]
Far from my salvation is the burden of my sins.

[1] presence: *or* face, countenance. (Gen. (16 : 13).
[2] 'Christ died that we might live' (1 Thess. 5 : 10; 1 Pet. 2 : 24).
[3] Dawn is one of Christ's names (cp. Lk. 1 : 78; Mal. 4 : 2).
[4] Cp. Isaiah 54:7. 'For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great mercy I will compassionate you. In brief displeasure I turned away My face from you, but with eternal love I will have mercy on you' (cp. Mt. 27 : 46; Mk. 15 : 34).

3 O my God, I cry by day and Thou answerest not,
and by night, yet it is not foolish of me.
4 But Thou dwellest in the holy place,
the praise of Israel.
5 Our fathers trusted in Thee;
they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.
6 They cried to Thee and were saved;
they trusted in Thee and were not disappointed.
7 But I am a worm, and not a man;
the scorn of men and an outcast of the people.
8 All who see me jeer at me;
they say with their lips as they wag their heads:
9 'He trusted in God. Let Him deliver him,
let Him save him, since He wants him.'[1]
10 For Thou art He who took me from the womb.
Thou hast been my hope from my mother's breasts.
11 I have been cast on Thy care from my birth;
Thou art my God from my mother's womb.
12 Leave me not when trouble is near,
for there is no one to help.
13 Many bullocks surround me,
fat bulls beset me.
14 They open their mouths at me,[2]
like a ravening and roaring lion.
15 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are disjointed;
my heart is like moulten wax within me.
16 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my throat;
Thou hast brought me down to the dust of death.
17 For a pack of dogs surround me,
and a gang of rogues beset me.
They have pierced my hands and my feet.[3]
18 They count all my bones;
they stare and gloat over me.
19 They divide my garments among them,
and for my robe they cast lots.[4]
20 But Thou, O Lord, delay not my help;
attend to my defence.

[1] Mt. 27 : 39, 43 ; Wis. 2 : 12-20. [2] Lam. 2 : 16 ; 3 : 46. [3] Jn. 19 : 37.
[4] Jn. 19 : 24.

21 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my only one[1] from the power of the dog.
22 Save me from the mouth of the lion,
and my humility from the horns of the rhinoceros.
23 I will declare Thy name to my brothers;
in the midst of the Church I will praise Thee.[2]
24 You who fear the Lord, praise Him;
all you sons of Jacob, glorify Him.
Let all the sons of Israel fear Him.
25 For He has not spurned or scorned the prayer of the poor,
nor turned away His face from me,
but when I cried to Him He answered me.
26 From Thee comes my praise in the great Church.
I will give thanks to Thee.
I will pay my vows before those who fear Him.
27 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the Lord will praise Him.
Their hearts will live for ever.
28 All the ends of the earth will remember
and return to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
will worship before Him.
29 For the Kingdom is the Lord's,
and it is He Who rules the nations.
30 All the great of the earth eat and worship in His presence;
all who go down to the earth fall down before Him.
May my soul live for Him.
31 And my children[3] will serve Him;
the coming generation will tell of the Lord.
32 They will tell of His righteousness to people yet to be born,
they will tell of the salvation the Lord has accomplished.[4]

PSALM 22

God the Good Shepherd-King Guides and Keeps His Sheep
Love follows the Followers of Love

(A Psalm by David)

1 The Lord is my Shepherd, and will deny me nothing.

[1] His only one is His Bride, the Church, that He holds in His arms. cp. Jn. 3:29. 'He who holds the bride is the Bridegroom.'
[2] Hebrews 2 : 12.
[3] my children : *Lit.* my seed.
[4] Romans 3 : 24-26; John 17 : 4; 19 : 30.

2 He settles me in green pasturage,
and raises me on refreshing water.[1]
3 He converts my soul,
and guides me on the right tracks
for His Name's sake.
4 For even though I go through the shadow of death,
I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me.
Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.
5 Thou hast prepared a table before me
in the face of those who trouble me.
6 Thou hast anointed my head with oil.
And Thy chalice which inebriates me, how glorious it is![2]
7 And Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life.
8 And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
throughout the length of my days.[3]

PSALM 23

The King of Glory enters His Sanctuary
Who can enter the Holy Mountain Temple?

(*A Psalm by David. For the first Sabbath*)

1 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,[4]
the world and all who dwell in it.
2 He has set it firmly on the seas,
and poised it on the floods.
3 Who will ascend into the mountain of the Lord,[5]
or who will stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not set his mind on vanity
or swear deceitfully to his neighbour.
5 He will receive blessing from the Lord,
and mercy from God his Saviour.
6 These are the kind that seek the Lord,
that seek the face of the God of Jacob. (*Pause*)

[1] 'He raises, rears and feeds me on the water of baptism, which restores health and strength to those who have lost them' (St. Augustine). cp. John 7:37-39.
[2] Cp. Ephes. 5 : 18.
[3] Cp. Ps. 26 : 4.
[4] 1 Cor. 10 : 26-28 ; cp. Psalm 49 : 12.
[5] Is. 2 : 2 ; Dan. 2 : 35 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 4.

7 Throw open the gates, you rulers,
swing open wide, you eternal doors,
and the King of Glory will enter.[1]
8 Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.
9 Throw open the gates, you rulers,
swing open wide, you eternal doors,
and the King of Glory will enter.
10 Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory. *Glory . . . .*

KATHISMA 4

PSALM 24

A Prayer for Guidance, Forgiveness and Redemption
The Covenant Consciousness (v. 14)

(A Psalm by David)

1 To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, in Thee I trust;
let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies laugh at me.
3 For none who wait for Thee shall be put to shame;
let those be ashamed who do wrong without cause.
4 Thy ways, O Lord, make known to me,
and teach me Thy paths.
5 Guide me in Thy truth and teach me;
for Thou, O God, art my Saviour,
and on Thee do I wait all day.
6 Remember Thy compassions and Thy mercies, O Lord,
for they are from all eternity.
7 Remember not the sins of my youth and ignorance,
but in Thy mercy remember me
for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.
8 Good and just is the Lord;
so He gives laws for a path to those astray.

[1] 'The Psalter indicates beforehand the Saviour's bodily Ascension into heaven', cp. also 46: 6 (St. Athanasius the Great). The angels in attendance at the Lord's ascension call to the angelic rulers or princes in charge of the gatekeepers to open the heavenly gates so that the King of Glory may enter, and they also address the actual doors that open into eternity (Rev. 3:20).

9 He will guide the meek in judgment,
He will teach the meek His ways.
10 All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth
to those who seek[1] His covenant and His laws.[2]
11 For Thy Name's sake, O Lord,
pardon my sin, for it is great.
12 Who is the man who fears the Lord?
He will guide him in the way he should choose.
13 His soul will dwell amid good things,
and his children[3] will inherit the earth.
14 The Lord is the strength of those who fear Him;
and His covenant is to make them know it.[4]
15 My eyes are continually on the Lord,
for He will draw my feet out of the net.
16 Turn Thy face to me and have mercy on me,
for I am lonely and poor.
17 The sorrows of my heart are multiplied;
O bring me out of my troubles.[5]
18 See my humiliation and my labour
and forgive me all my sins.
19 See how my enemies have increased,
and the cruel hatred with which they hate me.
20 O keep my soul and deliver me;
let me not be ashamed, for I have hoped in Thee.
21 The harmless and upright have joined me,
because I wait for Thee, O Lord.
22 Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all his troubles.

PSALM 25

The Prayer of a Good Conscience
Concentration encircles the Altar
(*By David*)

1 Judge me, O Lord,
for I have walked in my innocence;
and by trusting in the Lord
I shall not grow weak.

[1] seek: *Heb.* keep
[2] laws: *or*, testimonies, witnesses (Ps. 118 : 2)
[3] children: *lit.* seed.
[4] Strength is renewed by love—(blood)—transfusion. 'My love for you will never fail, nor will the covenant of your peace ever cease' (Isa. 54 : 10). 'This is My blood of the new covenant' (Mt. 26 : 28; cp. Prov. 3 : 6).
[5] *Or*: O relieve me of my afflictions.

2 Prove me, O Lord, and try me;
burn my heart and mind.
3 For Thy mercy is before my eyes,
and I delight in Thy truth.
4 I do not sit in frivolous gatherings,
nor do I consort with lawbreakers.
5 I hate the company of evildoers,
and I will not sit with the godless.
6 I will wash my hands among the innocent,
and will encircle Thy Altar, O Lord,
7 that I may hear the voice of praise[1]
and tell of all Thy wonders.
8 O Lord, I love the beauty of Thy house[2]
and the sanctuary of the abode of Thy glory.
9 Destroy not my soul with the wicked,
nor my life with men of blood,
10 in whose hands are iniquities,
and whose right hand is full of bribes.
11 But I walk in my innocence;
redeem me and have mercy on me.
12 My foot stands on the straight path;
I will bless Thee, O Lord, in the churches.[3]

PSALM 26

Contemplation of the Divine Beauty and Goodness
The Believing Heart does not Shrink in Fear

(*A Psalm of David before he was anointed*)

1 The Lord is my light and my Saviour;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the guard of my life;
from whom shall I shrink?

[1] (a) The voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church's praises 'to teach me how to praise Thee' (St. Augustine); (b) 'To hear God does not mean to catch audible sounds. How many are deaf to God! You should so hear the voice of praise as never to praise yourself, however good you may be. Humility made you good, pride makes you sinful' (St. Augustine). 'Keep your mind in an expectant frame to hear God's praises' (Tukaram). cp. Ps. 21 : 26.

[2] 'God's house means the ark, because the temple was not yet built' (St. Theodoret). 'The beauty of the house is those in the Church who are adorned with the beauty of holiness' (St. Athanasius).

[3] churches: assemblies, gatherings, congregations (not buildings).

2 When the wicked draw near me
to eat my flesh,
it is they, my oppressors and foes,
who grow feeble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise against me,
in this I hope.

4 One thing I ask of the Lord,
this one thing I request:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
that I may contemplate the Lord's delightful beauty
and visit His holy temple.

5 For He hides me in His sanctuary
in the day of trouble,
in the secrecy of His sanctuary He shelters me;
He lifts me high on a rock.

6 And even now He is lifting my head above my enemies;
I will go round and offer in His sanctuary
a sacrifice with shouts of joy.[1]
I will sing and praise the Lord.[2]

7 Hear, O Lord, my voice when I cry;
have mercy on me and answer me.

8 I will seek the Lord.
My heart speaks to Thee:
I have eyes only for Thee.
Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.

9 Turn not Thy face away from me,
and withdraw not in anger from Thy servant.
Be my helper, reject me not,
forsake me not, O God, my Saviour.

10 My father and mother abandoned me,
but the Lord welcomes me.[3]

[1] go round: *or* encircle the altar (cp. 25 : 6).

[2] 'Marvellous is it that man is not always praising, since everything continually invites praise' (St. Gregory).

'No sweeter fragrance than to follow Christ,
when man makes offerings of a holy life,
and offers golden deeds in sacrifice' (St. Prosper).

[3] cp. Psalm 21 : 11.

11 Be a law to me in Thy way, O Lord,
and guide me in the right path
because of my enemies.
12 Deliver me not to the hands of my oppressors,
for false witnesses have risen against me
and injustice has deceived itself.
13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
14 Wait for the Lord,
have courage, and let your heart be strong;
and wait for the Lord. *Glory . . . .*

PSALM 27

God the Protection and Salvation of His Anointed
A Prayer of Faith with Thanksgiving

(*By David*)

1 To Thee, O Lord, I cry.
O my God, be not silent to me;
lest if Thou be silent to me,
I become like those who go down to the pit.
2 Hear, O Lord, the cry of my prayer
when I pray to Thee,
when I lift up my hands
to Thy holy temple.
3 Do not drag away my soul with sinners
and destroy me not with wrongdoers,
who speak peace with their neighbour
while evil thoughts are in their hearts.
4 Give them, O Lord, according to their works,
and according to the evil of their ways;
give them according to the works of their hands,
repay them what they deserve.
5 Because they do not regard the works of the Lord
or the workings of His hands,[1]
Thou wilt pull them down and not build them up.
6 Blessed is the Lord, for He has heard
the voice of my prayer.
7 The Lord is my helper and my protector;
on Him my heart relies and I am helped.
Even my flesh has revived,
and with all my heart I will give thanks to Him.

[1] cp. Isaiah 5 : 12.

8 The Lord is the strength of His people,
and the protector and salvation of His anointed.
9 Save Thy people and bless Thy inheritance;
be their shepherd and carry them for ever.[1]

PSALM 28

The Voice of God: the Thunder of Silence
God's Power and Glory in a Thunderstorm

(A Psalm by David at the Exit of the Ark or Tabernacle.
For the Feast of Tabernacles in commemoration of the Exodus)

1 Bring to the Lord, O sons of God,
bring to the Lord young rams;
bring to the Lord honour and glory.
2 Bring to the Lord glory to His name;
worship the Lord in His holy court.
3 The voice of the Lord peals over the waters.
It is the God of glory thundering.
The Lord is over many waters.
4 The voice of the Lord is with power;
the voice of the Lord is with majesty.
5 The voice of the Lord shatters cedars;
The Lord shatters the cedars of Lebanon
and breaks them to pieces.
6 As a young rhinoceros crushes a calf,
so will the Beloved do to Lebanon.
7 The voice of the Lord bursts out in flashing lightning.
8 The voice of the Lord whirls the sand of the desert;
the Lord whirls the desert of Kadesh.
9 The voice of the Lord brings the birth-pangs on hinds,[2]
and strips the forests bare;
while in His temple all say, 'Glory!'[3]
10 The Lord inhabits the flood;
and the Lord sits enthroned as King eternally.
11 The Lord will give strength to His people;
the Lord will bless His people with peace.

[1] Cp. Isaiah 40 : 11 ; John 10 : 11.
[2] Cp. Exodus 9 : 23. In thunderstorms deer often cast their young.
[3] While storms rage on earth, all heavens sing God's glories. The storm of judgment clears the air for the Messianic age of peace (Shalom).

PSALM 29

Song of Praise and Thanksgiving : Thou hast Healed Me
In His Will is Life and Security

1 *(A Song for the Dedication of David's Palace)*

2 I will lift Thee on high, O Lord,
for Thou hast raised me up,
and hast not let my enemies rejoice over me.

3 O Lord, my God, I cried to Thee,
and Thou hast healed me.

4 O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from hell;
Thou hast saved me from those going down to the pit.

5 Sing to the Lord, O you His Saints,
and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

6 For wrath is in His anger,[1]
but in His will is life;
in the evening weeping may pitch its tent,
but joy comes with the morning.

7 So I said to myself in my prosperity:
'I shall never be shaken.'

8 O Lord, in Thy love grant power to my beauty.[2]
But Thou didst turn away Thy face,
and I became troubled.

9 To thee, O Lord, I will cry,
and I will pray to my God:

10 'What profit is there in my blood,[3]
by my going down to corruption?
Will the dust give thanks to Thee,
or will it declare Thy truth?'

11 The Lord has heard and had mercy on me;
the Lord has become my helper.

12 Thou hast turned my mourning for me into joy;
Thou hast ripped off my sackcloth
and clothed me with gladness,

[1] By angering and displeasing God, we incur wrath and retribution, 'for the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6 : 23). By doing God's will we find life, health and happiness (1 Jn. 2 : 17; 3 : 14; Rom. 14 : 17).

[2] 'Although I was beautiful by nature, I became feeble because I was deadened by sin through the malice of the serpent. So to the beauty I received from Thee when I was first created, Thou hast added power to do Thy will' (St. Basil the Great).

[3] Blood signifies death (cp. Lev. 17:14).

13 that my glory[1] may sing to Thee,
and that I may not be pierced with sorrow.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to Thee for ever.

Glory . . .

PSALM 30

A Passion Psalm. Confident Prayer in Trouble
Thou hast Redeemed Me, O Lord God of Truth

1 (*A Psalm by David. Of Madness*)

2 In Thee, O Lord, I hope and trust;
let me never be put to shame.
Rescue me and deliver me in Thy righteousness.[2]

3 Incline Thine ear to me;
make haste to deliver me.
Be my God and protector,
my house of refuge to save me.

4 For Thou art my strength and my refuge,
and for Thy Name's sake
Thou wilt guide me and support me.

5 Thou wilt get me out of this trap
which they have hidden for me,
for Thou art my protector, O Lord.

6 Into Thy hands I entrust my spirit;[3]
for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

7 Thou hatest those who observe empty follies;[4]
but I trust in the Lord.

8 I will rejoice and be glad in Thy mercy,
for Thou hast regarded my humility
and hast saved my soul from wants.

9 And Thou hast not shut me up
in the hands of my enemies,
but hast set my feet in fields of freedom.

[1] *glory*: 'The glory of a righteous man is the Spirit in him' (St. Basil the Great).

[2] Christ is our righteousness and holiness (1 Cor. 1 : 30). 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation ; the past is dead and gone, everything has become new' (2 Cor. 5 : 17).

[3] Luke 23 : 46.

[4] 'By follies he means distractions of the present life, by occupying ourselves with which we labour in vain' (St. Athanasius). By Biblical usage 'empty follies' could also refer to idolatry (cp. Syriac: 'false worship').

10 Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am distressed;
my eye is troubled with anger,
my soul and my body also.

11 For my life is spent with grief
and my years with sighing;
my strength has weakened from poverty,
and my bones are troubled.

12 I have become a reproach among all my enemies,
and especially among my neighbours,
and a horror to my acquaintances;
those who see me outside shun me.

13 I am forgotten like a buried corpse;
I am become like a broken pitcher.

14 For I hear the blame of many
who hover round me,
as they conspire together against me
and plot to take my life.

15 But I trust in Thee, O Lord.
I say: 'Thou art my God.'

16 My life is in Thy hands.
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies
and from those who persecute me.

17 Let Thy face shine on Thy servant;
save me in Thy mercy.

18 O Lord, let me not be disappointed,
for I call upon Thee.
Let the godless be disappointed
and brought down to hell.

19 Let lying lips be dumb
which forge iniquity against the righteous
in pride and contempt.

20 O how great is Thy infinite goodness, O Lord,[1]
which Thou hast hidden for those who fear Thee
and wrought for those who trust in Thee
before the sons of men!

[1] Supreme Goodness, God, Heaven is hidden in all things. Seek (See) and you will find. The apparent defeat and shame of the Cross is the supreme victory, blessing and grace of eternal Redemption (cp. Ps. 73 : 12; 110 : 9).

21 Thou hidest them in the secrecy of Thy presence
from the disturbance of men;
Thou shelterest them in Thy sanctuary
from the strife of tongues.
22 Blessed is the Lord,
for He has shown the wonder of His mercy
in a besieged city.
23 Yet I said in my madness:
'I am an outcast to Thy watchful presence.'[1]
But Thou didst hear the voice of my prayer
when I cried to Thee.
24 Love the Lord all you His Saints
for the Lord requires truth
and fully repays those who act with pride.[2]
25 Have courage and let your heart be strong,
all you who trust in the Lord.

PSALM 31

A Prayer of Repentance and Confession
The Joy of Being Forgiven

(*By David. Of Contemplation*)

1 Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.[3]
2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin
and in whose mouth there is no deceit.
3 When I kept silent,[4] my bones grew old
from my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me;
I was reduced to misery by a piercing thorn. (*Pause*)
5 I made known my sin to Thee
and no longer hid my iniquity.
I said: 'I will confess against myself my sin to the Lord.'
And Thou forgavest the profanity of my heart. (*Pause*)

[1] The sense of separation from God is the great illusion and madness.
[2] *Or*: and repays those who act with excessive pride.
[3] Rom. 4 : 7, 8, verbatim. cp. 'Love covers a multitude of sins' (1 Pet. 4 : 8). 'Such liberality God shows to sinners, that He not only forgives, but obliterates their sins, so that not the smallest vestige remains' (St. Theodoret). See also Ps. 84 : 3.
[4] 'When I was unable to confess' (St. Athanasius). A year passed before David confessed his two sins to Nathan (2 Sam. 12).

6 For this every saint should pray to Thee
at the right time;
then in a flood of many waters
the waves will not come near him.
7 Thou art my refuge from the trouble besetting me;
my joy, deliver me from those who surround me. (*Pause*)
8 'I will instruct you and teach you the way to go;
I will fix My eyes upon you.'
9 Be not like a horse or a mule,
which have no understanding,
whose mouth must be held with bit and bridle,
or they will not come near you.
10 Many are the scourges of the sinner,
but mercy surrounds him who trusts in the Lord.
11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous;
and exult all you whose hearts are right.[1]

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 5

PSALM 32

The New Song of Victory and Heavenly Earthquake
Praise of God's Perfection in Word and Work

1 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.
2 Give thanks to the Lord with the harp;
sing praises to Him with a ten-stringed psaltery.
3 Sing Him a song that is new;
sing with a will and a shout.
4 For the word of the Lord is true,
and all His works are acts of faith.
5 He loves mercy and justice;
the earth is full of the love of God.
6 By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made,
all the heavenly host by the Breath of His mouth.[2]

[1] Man is made for happiness, fruit of grace, forgiveness, right relations, holiness.

[2] Breath: *or* Spirit. cp. Gen. 6 : 3; 6 : 17; 7 : 15. 'Here a glimpse of the Holy Trinity is revealed' (St. Athanasius).

7 He gathers the sea waters as in a wineskin,
He puts the oceans in His cellars.
8 Let all the earth fear the Lord,
all who dwell in the world be shaken by Him.[1]
9 For He spoke, and they were born;[2]
He commanded, and they were created.
10 The Lord wrecks the plans of nations;
He rejects the thoughts of peoples,
and rejects the plans of rulers.
11 But the Lord's plan continues for ever,
the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation.
12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom He has chosen as His own inheritance.
13 The Lord looks down from heaven,
He sees all the sons of men.
14 From His permanent dwelling
He regards all who dwell on the earth.
15 It is He Who forms their hearts separately,
Who understands all their actions.
16 A king is not saved by a great army,
and a giant is not saved by his great strength.
17 A horse is a hoax for safety,
and with all its power it cannot save.
18 Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him,
on those who hope for His mercy,
19 to deliver their souls from death,
and to feed them in time of famine.
20 Our soul waits for the Lord;
for He is our helper and protector.
21 Our heart rejoices in Him,
and we trust in His holy name.
22 May Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
as our trust is in Thee.

[1] cp. Ezek. 38:20; Hag. 2:6-7; Amos 9:9. 'I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as one shakes with a sieve, but not a grain shall fall on the ground' (cp. Lk. 21:18, 'Not a hair of your head will be lost'). 'May all living on earth be shaken from their former state in which they served idols' (St. Athanasius the Great).

[2] Naturally and spiritually (Jn. 3:3-6).

PSALM 33

His Praise Continually in my Mouth
Taste and See that the Lord is Good

1 (*By David, when he disguised his character before Abimelech, who let him go, and he went away*)

2 I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall be continually in my mouth.
3 My soul will be praised in the Lord;
let the meek hear and rejoice.
4 O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt His name together.
5 I sought the Lord and He answered me,
and He delivered me out of all my troubles.
6 Surrender to Him and be radiant,
and your faces will never be ashamed.
7 This poor man cried and the Lord heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles.
8 The Angel of the Lord encamps
round those who fear Him and delivers them.
9 O taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the man who trusts in Him.
10 Fear the Lord, all you His saints;
for those who fear Him lack nothing.
11 The rich[1] do become poor and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing. (*Pause*)
12 Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
13 Who is the man who desires life
and loves to see good days?
14 Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
15 Shun evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
16 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and His ears are open to their prayer.
17 But the face of the Lord is against evildoers,
to wipe their memory from the land.[2]

[1] *rich*: opposite of Mt. 5 : 3; i.e., proud, fallen, apostate men.
[2] 'The land of the living.'

18 The righteous cry and the Lord hears them
and delivers them from all their troubles.
19 The Lord is near the broken-hearted,
and will save those who are humble in spirit.
20 Many are the troubles of the righteous,
but the Lord will deliver them from them all.
21 The Lord guards all their bones,
not one of them will be broken.
22 The death of sinners is evil,
and those who hate the just man sin.
23 The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants,
and none will sin who trust in Him.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 34

Christ's Passion seen in the Psalmist's Struggle
The Lord be Magnified

(*By David*)

1 Judge those who wrong me, O Lord,
fight those who fight me.
2 Take arms and shield,
and rise to help me.[1]
3 Draw the sword and bar the way
against those who persecute me.
Say to my soul: 'I am your salvation.'
4 Let those who seek my life be ashamed and confounded;
let those who devise evils for me be abashed and routed.
5 Let them be like dust in the face of the wind,
and let the angel of the Lord drive them.
6 Let their way be dark and slippery,
and let the angel of the Lord pursue them.
7 For they hid their destructive snare for me without cause;
in vain they reproached my soul.
8 Let a snare come upon them unawares;
and let them be caught in the trap they have hidden,
and let them fall into their own trap.

[1] 'Look, the heavens are opened, and I can see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7 : 56).

9 But my soul shall rejoice in the Lord
and delight in His salvation.
10 All my bones will say: ' Lord, who is like Thee,
who rescues the poor from the clutch of their overlords,
and the poor and needy from those who rob them ? '
11 False witnesses rose up against me,
and asked me things of which I knew nothing.
12 They repaid me evil for good,
to the desolation of my soul.
13 But I put on sackcloth, a hair-shirt
when they molested me,
and I humbled my soul with fasting;
and my prayer will return to my own bosom.
14 As though he were our brother, our friend,
I tried to conciliate him.
As one mourning and grieving I humbled myself.
15 But they rejoiced and gathered together against me.
The scourgers gathered against me, and I knew not why.[1]
They were divided and felt no compunction.
16 They tempted me, they sneered at me,
they gnashed their teeth at me.
17 O Lord, how long wilt Thou look on ?
Rescue my soul from their malice,
my only one[2] from the lions.
18 I will thank Thee in a great assembly.
I will praise Thee in a throng of people.
19 Let not those who are unjustly my enemies rejoice over me;
let not those who hate me without cause wink their eyes.[3]
20 For to me they spoke words of peace,
while with wrath they were devising plots.
21 And they opened their mouths wide against me,
and said: ' Fine, fine ! Our eyes have seen it.'
22 Thou hast seen, O Lord. Be not silent.
O Lord, forsake me not.
23 Arise, O Lord, and attend to my judgment;
avenge my cause, my God and my Lord.
24 Judge me, O Lord, by Thy justice;
O Lord my God, let them not rejoice over me.

[1] John 19 : 1; Mt. 27 : 26. [2] Cp. Psalm 21 : 21. [3] cp. John 15 : 25.

25 Let them not say in their hearts: ' Fine, fine!
Just what we wanted!'
Let them not say: ' We have swallowed him up!'
26 Let those who rejoice at my troubles
be ashamed and confounded together.
Let those who boast over me
be covered with shame and confusion.
27 Let those who desire my justification
rejoice and be glad.
Let those who wish the peace of Thy servant
say continually: ' The Lord be magnified.'
28 And my tongue shall tell of Thy justice[1]
and all the day long sing Thy praise.

PSALM 35

Fountain of Life, Torrent of Delight
Man's Malice and God's Goodness

1 *(By David the Servant of the Lord)*
2 The sinner, in order to sin, talks to himself.
There is no fear of God before his eyes.
3 For he deceives himself
over finding his sin and hating it.
4 The words of his mouth are wicked and false;
he has no will to live wisely and well.
5 He plans wrongdoing on his bed,
he is ready for any course not good,
and vice he does not avoid.
6 O Lord, Thy mercy reaches to heaven
and Thy truth to the clouds.
7 Thy justice is like towering mountains,
Thy judgments are like the great deep.
Thou savest men and beasts, O Lord.
8 How great is Thy mercy, O God!
The children of men trust in the shelter of Thy wings.
9 They will become drunk with the fat[2] of Thy house,
and they will drink from the torrent of Thy delight.

[1] cp. Psalm 36 : 30. [2] cp. Psalm 109 : 7.

10 For with Thee is the fountain of life,
and in Thy light we see light.[1]
11 O continue Thy mercy to those who know Thee,
and Thy justice to the upright of heart.
12 Let not the foot of pride kick me,[2]
and let not the hand of sinners shake me.
13 There all whose work is sin have fallen ;
they are thrust out and cannot stand. *Glory . . . .*

PSALM 36

The Meek inherit the Land of Peace
Insecurity in Apparent Prosperity of Sinners
(*By David*)

1 Do not fret because of evildoers,[3]
nor envy those who commit sin.
2 For they will soon wither like grass,
and like green herbs they will soon fall.
3 Trust in the Lord, and do good ;
dwell in the land[4] and be fed on its wealth.[5]
4 Delight in the Lord,[6]
and He will grant you your heart's desires.
5 Commit your way to the Lord,
and trust in Him, and He will act.
6 And He will bring to light your honesty
and make your cause clear as noonday.
7 Submit to the Lord and pray to Him.
Do not fret over one who prospers in his way,[7]
the man who thrives by dishonesty.

[1] No one can illumine himself; all light comes from above, from 'the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father' (Jn. 15 : 26). In the light of the Spirit we see the Son and Word in Whom we see the Father : 'To see Me is to see Him Who sent Me' (Jn. 12 : 45). When light dawns in the dark heart of man, he sees his own deformity and need of salvation and at the same time 'the light of the glorious Gospel . . . . in the person of Jesus Christ' (II Cor. 4 : 3-6).

[2] 'The Prophet asks to be free from passion' (St. Athanasius).

[3] Prov. 24:19.

[4] 'The land of the living' (St. Jerome). 'Our home is in Heaven' (Phil. 3 : 20). 'Live in My love' (Jn. 15 : 9).

[5] 'Wealth'. This is the only gold that satisfies without aggravating the desire which it seems to allay (cp. Rev. 21:21).

[6] We delight in the Lord by seeing and contemplating God through His works, by living in His love, and by finding all our joy and happiness in Him.

[7] 'There are ways that seem right to a man, but they lead to the bottom of hell' (Prov. 16:25). cp. Heb. 4:10; Is. 28:12; 30:15; Jn. 4:34; 6:38.

8 Cease from wrath and forsake anger;
do not fret yourself into evildoing.
9 For the evildoers will be destroyed,
but those who wait for the Lord will inherit the land.
10 Yet a little while, and the sinner is gone;
you will seek his place and never find it.
11 But the meek will inherit the land,[1]
and will delight in an abundance of peace.
12 The sinner watches the righteous man,
and gnashes his teeth at him.
13 But the Lord laughs at him,
for He sees that his day is coming.[2]
14 The sinners draw their sword and bend their bow,
to bring down the poor and needy,
and slaughter the honest-hearted.
15 Let their sword enter their own heart,
and let their bows be broken.
16 Better is the little that the righteous man has
than the great wealth of sinners.
17 For the arms of sinners will be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.
18 The Lord knows the ways of the blameless,
and their inheritance will be eternal.
19 They are not embarrassed in bad times,
and in days of dearth they have enough.
20 But sinners will perish,
those enemies of the Lord;
no sooner honoured and exalted
than they die and vanish like smoke.
21 The sinner borrows and does not repay;
but the just man shows compassion and gives.
22 Those who bless him will inherit the land,
but those who curse him will be ruined.
23 The steps of a man are directed by the Lord,
when he takes great delight in His way.
24 When he happens to fall, he will not fall headlong;
for the Lord holds his hand.

[1] cp. Mt. 5 : 5. 'Land' : *or* earth. 'The land of the living.'
[2] *coming*: 'We need not despair of anyone, so long as there is life. If we remember what we have been, we shall not despair of those who are now what we once were' (St. Augustine).

25 I was young and now I am old,
yet I have not seen a good man forsaken
or his children begging bread.
26 All day long the good are merciful and lend
and their children are a blessing.
27 Shun evil and do good
and live eternally.
28 For the Lord loves justice
and will not forsake His saints;
they will be kept for ever.
But the lawless will be driven out,
and the sons of the godless will be exterminated.
29 The righteous will inherit the land,
and dwell in it for ever.
30 A just man's mouth reflects wisdom,
and his tongue speaks justice.
31 The law of his God is in his heart,
and his steps do not slip.
32 The sinner watches the righteous man
and seeks occasion to kill him.
33 But the Lord will not leave him in his hands,
nor condemn him when he is judged.
34 Wait for the Lord and keep His way,
and He will exalt you to inherit the land.
When sinners are destroyed, you will see it.
35 I have seen a godless man highly exalted
and towering aloft like the cedars of Lebanon.
36 And I passed by, and lo! he was gone.
I looked for him, and he was nowhere to be found.[1]
37 Watch innocence, and behold justice,
for there is a future for the man of peace.[2]
38 But sinners will be exterminated together;
the remnants of the godless will be destroyed.
39 The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord,
and He is their protector in time of trouble.
40 The Lord will help them and deliver them;
He will rescue them from sinners and save them,
because they put their trust in Him. *Glory . . . .*

[1] 'Remove sin, and then whatever you see in man is of God' (St. Augustine)
[2] Compare Ps. 36:1, 37 with Proverbs 24 : 19-20 (RSV) and Mt. 5 : 5-9.

KATHISMA 6

PSALM 37

The Saviour's Passion
The Suffering Saint and the Isolation of Sin

1 (*A Psalm by David. For a Memorial. Concerning the Sabbath*)
2 O Lord, rebuke me, but not in Thine anger;
and chasten me, but not in Thy wrath.[1]
3 For Thy arrows stick fast in me,
and Thou art pressing Thy hand upon me.
4 There is no healing in my flesh because of Thy wrath,
there is no peace in my bones because of my sins.
5 For my sins have gone over my head;
they weigh upon me like a heavy burden.
6 My wounds stink and fester
through my foolishness.
7 I am miserable and utterly dejected;
I go mourning all day long.
8 For my soul is filled with mockings;
and there is no healing in my flesh.
9 I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly;
I roar from the anguish of my heart.
10 Lord, Thou knowest all my desire,
and my groaning is not hidden from Thee.
11 My heart is troubled, my strength fails me;
and the very light of my eyes is no longer with me.
12 My friends and my neighbours draw near and confront me;
and my nearest stand afar off.
13 Those also who seek my life take to violence;
and those who seek to do me evil discuss intrigues
and imagine deceits all the day long.
14 But I am like a deaf man who cannot hear
and like a dumb man who cannot open his mouth.
15 I have become like a man who hears nothing
and in his mouth has no rebukes.
16 For in Thee, O Lord, I have put my trust;
Thou wilt answer me, O Lord my God.

[1] cp. Heb. 12 : 5-13. Psalm 6 : 2 is identical with 37 : 2.

17 For I pray: 'Do not let my enemies rejoice over me
and exult over me if my feet slip.'
18 For I am ready for scourges,
and my pain is before me continually.
19 For I confess my lawlessness
and I am concerned about my sin.
20 But my enemies live and have got possession of me,
and those who hate me wrongfully have multiplied.
21 Those who repay me evil for good have slandered me,
because I pursue goodness.
22 Forsake me not, O Lord;
O my God, be not far from me.
23 Come to my help,
O Lord of my salvation.

PSALM 38

Pilgrims and Strangers, Nomads and Guests
The Lord is my Patience and my Courage

1 (*For Jeduthun. A Song by David*)
2 I said: 'I will watch my ways,
lest I sin with my tongue.
I must put a muzzle on my mouth
so long as sinners are with me.'
3 I became dumb and was humble,
and I stopped doing good,
yet my pain only grew worse.
4 My heart burned within me,
and as I reflected the fire blazed out.
Then I prayed with my tongue:
5 'Lord, let me know my end
and the number of my days,
that I may know what I lack.[1]
6 Thou hast made my days a few spans,
and my existence is nothing in Thy sight.'
Truly all is vanity, every man alive. (*Pause*)
7 Surely man passes like a shadow,
and disquiets himself in vain;
he hoards wealth and does not know
for whom he is gathering it.

[1] cp. Mt. 19:20. 'One thing you lack' (Mk. 10:21).

8 And now, who is my patience ?[1]
Is it not the Lord ?
And my courage is from Thee.
9 Deliver me from all my sins ;
Thou hast made me the taunt of the fool.
10 I am dumb and tongue-tied,
because Thou hast made me so.
11 Remove Thy scourges from me,
for I faint at the vehemence of Thy hand.
12 With rebukes Thou correctest man for sin,
and puttest his soul to the test
till he is as weak as a spider.
Yet every man disquiets himself in vain. (*Pause*)
13 Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and give ear to my petition ;
be not silent at my tears.
For I am a pilgrim and stranger with Thee
as all my fathers were.
14 O spare me, that I may recover my strength,
before I depart and exist no more.

PSALM 39

A New Song : Praise to our God
A Body Prepared for the Redeemer: I come to do Thy will

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 I waited and waited for the Lord,
and He attended to me and heard my prayer.
3 And He brought me up out of the pit of misery
and from the miry clay,
and He set my feet on a rock and directed my steps.
4 And He has put a new song in my mouth,
praise to our God.[2]
Many will see and fear,
and will trust in the Lord.
5 Blessed is the man
whose hope is the name of the Lord,
and who pays no regard to vanities
or mad delusions.

[1] *patience:* endurance, perseverance, persistence (Lk. 21:19).
[2] 'Nothing so sustains and strengthens Christian souls as persevering and untiring praise of God' (St. Leo the Great).

6 Many are Thy works, O Lord my God,
and the wonders Thou hast done for us,
and in Thy thoughts
there is no one like Thee.
If I recount or speak of them,
they are more than I can tell.
7 Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired,[1]
but a body Thou hast prepared for me.
Burnt-offerings and sin-offerings
Thou hast not required.
8 Then I said: Lo, I come
(in the roll of the Book it is written of me)
9 to do Thy will, O my God[2].
I am determined to do it,
indeed Thy law is within my heart.
10 I have preached righteousness
in the great congregation.[3]
I will not restrain my lips;
Thou knowest, O Lord.
11 I have not hidden Thy righteousness
within my heart;
I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation.
I have not hidden Thy mercy and Thy truth
from a large assembly.
12 Withhold not then, O Lord,
Thy compassion from me;
let Thy mercy and Thy truth
continually uphold me.
13 For countless evils surround me;
my sins have caught me so I cannot look up.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.
14 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, draw near and help me.
15 Let those who seek to destroy my soul
be ashamed and confounded together;
let those who wish me evil
be turned back and put to shame.

[1] cp. 1 Sam. 15:22. Love shown in obedience is the true sacrifice.
[2] Heb. 10:3-10; Lk. 4:16-21; Lk. 24:44; Jn. 4:34; Rom. 7:22. 'The Jews still keep their Scriptures in scrolls' (St. Theodoret).
[3] The great universal Church (cp. St. Athanasius).

16 Let those who say to me, ' Fine, fine !'
suddenly earn their shame.
17 Let all who seek Thee rejoice
and be glad in Thee, O Lord;
and let those who love Thy salvation
say continually, ' The Lord be magnified.'
18 But I am poor and needy;
the Lord will care for me.
Thou art my helper and my protector;
O my God, make no delay. *Glory . . . .*

PSALM 40

The Blessing of Compassion: Prayer for Healing
Christ's Betrayal Foreshadowed

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 Blessed is he who considers the poor and needy;
the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.
3 The Lord will guard him and give him life,
and will bless him in the land,
and will not give him up into the hands of his enemies.
4 The Lord will help him on his bed of pain;
Thou wilt turn all his bed to health in his sickness.
5 I said: ' Lord, be merciful to me;
heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.'
6 My enemies vent their malice against me:
' When will he die and his name perish?'
7 And if one comes to see me, he talks nonsense;
his heart gathers iniquity to itself.
He goes out, and speaks of it.[1]
8 All my enemies whisper against me;
they devise evils against me.
9 They spread a false report against me.
Will not the sleeper surely rise again ? [2]
10 Why, even my intimate friend in whom I trusted,
who shared my bread,
has lifted up his heel against me.[3]

[1] John 13:30.

[2] 'Do you think to conquer Life by death ? Death is merely sleep, and I will rise again' (St Athanasius).

[3] John 13:18. Just as Ahitophel turned against David and then hanged himself, so Judas turned against Jesus (2 Sam. 17 : 1,2,23).

11 But Thou, O Lord, have mercy on me[1]
and raise me up, and I will repay them.
12 By this I know that Thou delightest in me,
that my enemy does not triumph over me.
13 And because of my innocence Thou hast helped me
and secured me in Thy presence for ever.
14 Blessed is the Lord God of Israel
from age to age.
Amen. Amen.

PSALM 41

The Ultimate Sorrow: Loss of God
I Thirst : Deep calls to Deep

1 *(For contemplation. For the sons of Korah*
2 As yearns the deer over springs of water,[2]
so yearns my soul for Thee, O God.
3 My soul thirsts for God, for the strong living God.
When shall I come and behold the face of God?
4 My tears are my bread day and night,
while they say to me daily: 'Where is your God?'
5 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me.
I will pass into a place of wondrous protection
to the house of God
with shouts of joy and thanksgiving
and festive singing.
6 Why are you downcast, O my soul?
And why are you disquieting me?
Trust in God, for I will praise and thank Him;
He is the salvation of my person and my God.
7 My soul is troubled within me.
Therefore I will remember Thee
from the land of Jordan
and the Hermons, from the small mountain.
8 Deep calls to deep at the roar of Thy cataracts;
all Thy waves and Thy billows sweep over me.

[1] With the Gospel of forgiveness (1 Sam. 24 : 17-20; Lk. 23 : 34).
[2] In Palestine which is rainless for 9 months of the year, springs, wells and aqueducts are kept covered. Deer come and stand over the water, braying and languishing for the hidden treasure below. With this psalm in His heart Christ said, 'I thirst' (Jn. 19 : 28).

9 The Lord will show His mercy in the daytime,
and in the night His song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.
10 I will say to God : 'Thou art my protector.
Why hast Thou forgotten me ?
And why must I go mourning
with my enemy oppressing me ?'
11 As if crushing my bones my enemies taunt me
and say to me daily: 'Where is your God ? '
12 Why are you downcast, O my soul ?
And why are you disquieting me ?
Trust in God, for I will praise and thank Him;
He is the salvation of my person and my God.

PSALM 42

Light and Truth from God's Holy Mountain
The Way to God is the Way of the Altar

(A Psalm by David)

1 Judge me, O God, and defend my cause
from an unholy nation ;
deliver me from the wicked and treacherous man.
2 For thou, O God, art my strength.
Why hast Thou rejected me ?
And why must I go mourning
with my enemy oppressing me ?
3 O send out Thy light and Thy truth
that they may lead me and bring me
to Thy holy mountain and to Thy dwelling.
4 And I will go to the altar of God,
to God, the joy of my youth.[1]
I will praise and thank Thee
on the harp, O God, my God.
5 Why are you downcast, O my soul ?
And why are you disquieting me ?
6 Trust in God, for I will praise and thank Him;
He is the salvation of my person and my God.

Glory . . . .

[1] The way to God is the way of the altar of the cross (Heb. 4 : 16 ; 13 : 10) God is the joy of the new man born crucified. Joy renews life (St Athanasius)

PSALM 43

Saved for Love, Service and Suffering
In God We Glory and are Killed All Day Long

1 (*For the sons of Korah. A Psalm for Contemplation*)

2 O God, we have heard with our ears
and our fathers have told us
the work Thou didst in their days,
in the days of long ago.
3 Thy hand destroyed the nations,
and Thou didst plant our fathers.[1]
Thou didst afflict peoples and evict them.
4 For it was not by their sword
that they took possession of the land,
and it was not their arm that saved them;
but it was Thy right hand and Thy arm
and the light of Thy face and presence,
because of Thy love for them.
5 Thou Thyself art my King and my God,
Who dost command the salvation of Jacob.
6 Through Thee we rout our enemies,
and in thy name we scorn our assailants.
7 For I will not trust in my bow,
and it is not my sword that will save me.
8 But it is Thou Who savest us from our oppressors,
and puttest to shame those who hate us.
9 In God we glory all day long,
and we give praise and thanks to Thy name for ever. (*Pause*)
10 Yet now Thou hast rejected us and put us to shame,
by not going out with our armies, O God.
11 Thou hast put us to flight before our enemies,
and those who hate us plunder us as they please.
12 Thou hast given us up like sheep to be eaten
and hast scattered us among the nations.
13 Thou hast sold Thy people for nothing,
and there is no gathering at Thy festivals.

[1] cp. 2 Macc. 1 : 29, 'Plant Thy people in Thy sanctuary, as Moses said' (Dt. 30 : 5; Ex. 15 :17).

14 Thou hast made us the taunt of our neighbors,
a scorn and derision to those around us.

15 Thou hast made us a byword among the nations,
a shaking of the head among the peoples.

16 All day long my disgrace is before me,
and my face is covered with shame,

17 at the voice of the taunter and blasphemer,
at the sight of the enemy and avenger.

18 All this has come upon us,
yet we had not forgotten Thee
or broken Thy covenant.

19 We have not withdrawn our hearts from Thee,
yet Thou hast turned our steps from Thy way.

20 For Thou hast humbled us in a place of affliction
and covered us with the shadow of death.

21 If we have forgotten the name of our God,[1]
or stretched out our hands to a strange god,

22 will not God require us to answer for it?
For He knows the secrets of the heart.

23 Yet for Thy sake we are being killed all day long,[2]
we are counted as sheep for slaughter.

24 Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?
Arise, reject us not for ever.

25 Why turn Thy face away
and forget our need and our affliction?

26 For our soul is humbled to the dust;
our belly hugs the earth.

27 Arise, O Lord, help us
and redeem us for Thy name's sake.

[1] Yahweh = He Who is. The name implies the nature which demands the love of the whole man, to the exclusion of all other objects of adoration (Acts 4 : 12 ; Ex. 3 : 13-15).

[2] Rom. 8 : 36 'It is possible to die many times in a day. For he who is always ready to die keeps receiving his full reward' (St. Chrysostom).

PSALM 44

The Messiah King in His Beauty and Universal Rule
Wedding Song of the Warrior King

1 (*For those who are to be changed. For the sons of Korah. For contemplation. A song of the Beloved*)

2 My heart is bubbling over with a good word;[1]
I address my works to the King.
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

3 Thou art lovely with a beauty beyond the sons of men;
grace pours from Thy lips;
therefore God has blessed Thee for ever.

4 Gird Thy sword on Thy thigh, O Mighty Warrior,[2]
in thy splendor and beauty.

5 Draw Thy bow and prosper and reign
in the cause of truth and meekness and justice;
and Thy right hand will guide Thee wonderfully.

6 Thy arrows are sharp, O Mighty Warrior,
in the heart of the King's enemies;[3]
peoples will fall under Thee.

7 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a rod of justice.

8 Thou hast loved right and hated wrong.
Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee
with the oil of gladness beyond Thy fellows.[4]

9 Thy garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes and cassia,
from the ivory palaces which gladden Thee.

10 Kings' daughters are among Thy ladies of honor.
On Thy right hand stands the queen
arrayed in gold inwrought with many colors.

11 Listen, my daughter, and see, and incline your ear;
and forget your people and your father's house.

12 Then the King will desire your beauty,
for He is your Lord and you shall worship Him.

[1] 'Refers to the intellectual faculty of the soul, because of all the ideas that are constantly bubbling and welling up. He who fixes his gaze on the infinite beauty of God is constantly discovering something new. And as God continues to reveal Himself, man continues to wonder.' (St. Gregory of Nyssa).

[2] cp. Rev. 19 : 11-16.

[3] The arrows of divine love wound the hearts of God's enemies and turn them into lovers.

[4] Heb. 1 : 8,9. 'The coming of Messiah is mentioned first and foremost in Psalm 44' (St. Athanasius the Great).

13 And the daughter of Tyre will worship Thee with gifts;
the richest of the people will entreat Thy favor.[1]
14 All the glory of the King's daughter is within,
though she is arrayed in tasselled gold inwrought with many colors.
15 The virgins in her train will be brought to the King;
those near her will be brought to Thee.
16 They will be brought with joy and gladness;
they will be led into the King's temple.
17 Instead of Thy fathers, sons are born to Thee;
Thou shalt make them rulers over all the earth.
18 I will remember Thy name throughout all generations;
therefore people will praise and thank Thee for ever and ever.

PSALM 45

God is with Us: Lifted Up on the Cross
The Warrior King is Abolishing War

1 (*For the sons of Korah. A Psalm concerning hidden things*)
2 Our God is our refuge and strength,
our helper in the troubles that grievously befall us.
3 So we will not fear though the earth should rock
and mountains be hurled into the heart of the sea,
4 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains are convulsed by His power. (*Pause*)
5 The streams of the river gladden the city of God;[2]
the Most High has sanctified His dwelling-place.
6 God is within her, and she cannot be shaken,
God will help her at break of dawn.[3]
7 Nations are in turmoil, kingdoms totter;
He lifts His voice, the earth reels.
8 The Lord of Hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our protector. (*Pause*)
9 Come and see the works of God,
the wonders He has done on earth.
10 He is abolishing wars all over the earth;
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear,
and burns up all the shields with fire.[4]

[1] Favor: *Lit.* Face. A Hebraism. cp. Psalm 118 : 58.
[2] Rev. 22 : 1.
[3] Security of citizens of the Holy City. Break of Dawn is Christ's death. (cp. Is. 30 : 26).
[4] cp. 75 : 4; Is. 2 : 4; 11 : 9; 65 : 25; Hos. 2 : 18; Zac. 9 : 10.

11 Be still and know that I am God ;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be lifted up on the earth.[1]
12 The Lord of Hosts is with us ;
the God of Jacob is our protector.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 7

PSALM 46

The Great King of the Earth : His Triumphant Ascension
A Call to All Nations to clap for Joy: Love Reigns

1 (*A Psalm for the sons of Korah*)
2 All you nations, clap your hands;[2]
shout to God with cries of joy.
3 For the Lord Most High is terrible ;[3]
He is the great King over all the earth.
4 He subdues peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
5 He has chosen for us an inheritance for Him,[4]
the beauty of Jacob whom He loves. (*Pause*)
6 God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a horn.
7 Sing praises, sing praises to our God ;
Sing praises, sing praises to our King.
8 For God is King of all the earth ;
sing praises with understanding.
9 God is reigning over the nations ;
God is seated on His holy throne.
10 Rulers of peoples gather together
with the people of the God of Abraham,
for God's strong men of the earth
are highly exalted.[5]

[1] Cp. Jn. 3:14; 8 : 28; 12:32. 'I will be lifted up on the cross' (St. Basil the Great). *Scholasate* = 'Be still, all ears and attention.'
[2] 'The calling of the Gentiles is to be understood, as in 71 : 9' (St. Athanasius).
[3] Cp. Heb. 12 : 28, 29; Deut. 4:24; 9:3; 10:17-21; Neh. 1:5; Zeph. 2:11.
[4] Cp. Ex. 15 : 17; Is. 58 : 14 ; I Pet. 1 : 4.
[5] 'Who are God's strong men ? They are the Apostles and all the faithful. They are strong because they faced the whole world, they overcame all, and nothing could defeat them' (St. Chrysostom).

PSALM 47

The Glory of Mount Zion, God's Eternal City
The Invincibility of the Church

1 (*Psalm of a Song for the Songs of Korah. For the second Sabbath*)
2 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised
in the city of our God, on His holy mountain,
3 beautifully situated, the joy of all the earth.
Mount Zion, the northern slopes
is the city of the great King.[1]
4 God is known within her citadels
when He defends her.
5 For lo, the kings of the earth joined forces
and advanced together.
6 On seeing her they were lost in wonder,
they were alarmed, they were shaken.
7 Trembling seized them there,
like the pangs of a woman in childbirth,
8 when with a violent wind
Thou didst wreck the ships of Tarshish.[2]
9 As we have heard, so we have seen[3]
in the city of the Lord of Hosts,
in the city of our God;
God has founded her for ever. (*Pause*)
10 We have received Thy mercy, O God,
in the midst of Thy people.
11 Thy praise, O God, like Thy name
reaches to the ends of the earth.
Thy right hand is full of justice,
righteousness and right judgment.
12 Let Mount Zion be glad
and let the daughters of Judah rejoice
because of Thy judgments, O Lord.
13 Encircle Zion and make the round of her;[4]
take count of her towers.

[1] 'Jerusalem is the city of the great King' (Mt. 5 : 35). cp. Lam. 2 : 15.
[2] Tarshish : in Ceylon. The words used for ivory, apes and peacocks brought from Tarshish are Singhalese Tamil (II Chron. 9 : 21).
[3] cp. Ps. 71 : 10. 'What we heard, we have seen in actual fact, namely victories, triumphs, God's providential care, astounding miracles' (St. Chrysostom).
[4] After the victory, there is a tour of inspection. Perhaps this Psalm was sung as the procession went round the city walls.

14 Give your mind to her power,[1]
and inspect her citadels,
that you may tell the next generation:
15 This is our God for ever and ever.
He will shepherd us eternally.

PSALM 48

Riches and Honor and the Grim Shepherd Death
God will Redeem my Soul

1 (*A Psalm for the Sons of Korah*)

2 Hear this, all you nations;
give ear, all dwellers in the world,
3 clods of earth and men of worth,
rich and poor alike.
4 My mouth will speak wisdom
as the meditation of my heart brings understanding.
5 I will incline my ear to a parable;
I will expound my problem on the harp.
6 Why should I fear on an evil day,
when iniquity dogs my heel and surrounds me?
7 Some trust in their power,
and some boast of the amount of their wealth.
8 A brother cannot redeem; can a man redeem?[2]
He cannot give a ransom to God for himself,
9 or the price of his soul's redemption,
even if he were to labour all his life
10 and were to live for ever.
Will he not see corruption
when he sees the wise dying?
11 The fool and the dolt perish together,
and they leave their riches to strangers.
12 And their graves are their homes for ever,
their dwelling-places for all generations;
they call their lands after their own names.
13 But man who was in honor did not understand:
he has been compared to thoughtless animals
and has become like them.

[1] *Lit.* Set your hearts on her power.

[2] Yes, when that man is also the Eternal Son and Word and Wisdom of God, 'the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. 2:5; Jn. 1:1 etc.)

14 This very way of theirs
is a pitfall to them,
yet after all this
they express delight with their mouth. (*Pause*)
15 They are driven to hell like sheep,
where death shepherds them.
But with the Dawn the upright will rule over them,
and their help will vanish in hell.
They are banished from their glory.
16 But God will redeem my soul
from the power of hell,
when He receives me. (*Pause*)
17 Have no fear when a man grows rich
or when the glory of his house increases;
18 for he will take nothing with him when he dies,
and his glory will not descend with him.
19 Though during his life his soul is blessed
and he thanks Thee when Thou prosperest him,
20 yet he will go to join his fathers
and will never see the light.
21 Man who was in honor did not understand:
he has been compared to thoughtless animals
and has become like them.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 49

The Sacrifice of Praise: Worship in Spirit
Sins of Formalism and Hypocrisy

(*A Psalm by Asaph*)

1 The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken
and has called the earth
from sunrise to sunset.
2 The loveliness of His beauty
has appeared out of Zion.
3 God will come visibly;
no longer will our God keep silence.
A fire will burn before Him,
and a mighty storm will rage round Him.
4 He will summon heaven above
and the earth to judge His people.

5 Gather His saints together to Him—
those who have made a covenant with Him for sacrifice.
6 And the heavens will declare His justice,
for God is judge. (*Pause*)
7 ‘ Listen, My people, and I will speak.
O Israel, I must protest against you :
I am God, your God.
8 I find no fault with your sacrifices ;
your whole burnt-offerings are before Me continually.
9 It is not bullocks from your farm I welcome,
nor he-goats from your folds.
10 For all the beasts of the forest are Mine,
the herds and cattle on the mountains.
11 I know all the birds of the sky,
and all the beauty of the countryside is Mine.
12 If I am hungry, I will not tell you ;
for the world is Mine, and all that is in it.
13 Am I to eat bulls’ flesh,
or drink the blood of goats ?
14 Offer to God a sacrifice of praise,
and pay your vows to the Most High.
15 Then call upon Me in the day of trouble ;
and I will deliver you and you will glorify Me.’ (*Pause*)
16 But to the sinner God says :
‘ Why do you declare My rights,
and take My covenant in your mouth,
17 while you hate correction,
and turn your back on My words ?[1]
18 If you see a thief, you run with him,
and you throw in your lot with adulterers.
19 Your mouth exaggerates malice,
and your tongue weaves deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your brother,
and provoke a scandal against your own mother’s son.
21 These things you have done, and I was silent.
You assumed the profanity that I am like you.
I will convict you and set your sins before your face.

[1] words : In the first place the Ten Words or Commandments, three of which are named here : stealing, adultery and blasting instead of blessing (false witness). The commandments are correctives (verse 17a).

22 Now consider this, you who forget God,
lest death snatch you away
and there is no one to save you.'
23 The sacrifice of praise glorifies Me,
and this is the way I will show him My salvation.

PSALM 50

Broken-Hearted Repentance
The Renewal of the Holy Spirit

1 (*A Psalm by David, when Nathan the Prophet came to him*
2 *for his sin with Bathsheba*)

3 Have mercy on me, O God,
in Thy great mercy;
and in Thy abundant compassion
blot out my transgression.
4 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
5 For I realize my iniquity,
and my sin is before me continually.
6 Against Thee only have I sinned
and done evil in Thy sight,
that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words
and win when Thou art judged.[1]
7 For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities,
and in sins did my mother desire me.
8 For, lo, Thou lovest truth;
the unknown and secret things of Thy wisdom
Thou hast made known to me.
9 Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,[2]
and I shall be cleansed;
Thou shalt wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow.
10 Thou shalt make me hear joy and gladness;
the bones that have been humbled will rejoice.
11 Turn Thy face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

[1] Men accuse God of various wrongs. So God is thought of as under trial. But when a man admits his guilt, God is acquitted and wins His case, so to speak, and incidentally wins the heart and soul of His child (cp. Lk. 23: 39-43).

[2] Exodus 12 : 22; John 19 : 29; Hebrews 9 : 19.

12 Create in me, a clean heart, O God;
and renew Thy right Spirit within me.
13 Cast me not away from Thy face,
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
14 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
and strengthen me with Thy ruling Spirit.
15 I shall teach Thy ways to the lawless,
and the godless will return to Thee.
16 Deliver me from blood, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will extol Thy justice.
17 O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips,
and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.
18 For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice,
I would have given it.
Burnt-offerings do not please Thee.
19 The sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;
a broken and humbled heart God will not despise.
20 Gladden Zion, O Lord, with Thy goodwill,
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.
21 Then Thou wilt be pleased
with the sacrifice of righteousness,
the oblation and burnt-offerings;
then they will offer calves on Thy altar.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 51

A Fruitful Tree in God's House
The Fate of Liars and Worshippers of the Beast

1 (*Of Contemplation. By David; when Doeg the Edomite came and*
2 *told Saul and said to him, 'David went to Abimelech's house.'*)
3 Why do you glory in evil, strong man,
and commit iniquity all day long?
4 Your tongue devises injury and falsehood;
like a sharp razor you practise deceit.
5 You love evil more than goodness,
and lying rather than speaking the truth. (*Pause*)
6 You love all devouring words,
and a deceitful tongue.

7 For this God will destroy you utterly;
He will pluck you out
and drive you from your dwelling,
and root you out of the land of the living. (*Pause*)
8 The righteous will see and fear;
and they will laugh at him, and say:
9 'Behold the man who would not make God his helper,
but trusted in the amount of his riches,
and strengthened himself in his vanity!'
10 But I am like a fruitful olive tree
in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God
for this life and for eternity.
11 I will praise and thank Thee for ever
for all Thou hast done;
and I will stand by Thy name,
for it is good to be with Thy saints.

PSALM 52

Unbelief leads to Idolatry and Immorality
Evildoers Haunted by Fear and Shame

1 (*A Prayer of Contemplation. By David*)
2 The fool says in his heart: 'There is no God.'
They are corrupt and abominable in their iniquities;
there is not one that does good.
3 God looks through from heaven at the sons of men
to see if any understand or seek God.
4 All have strayed, one and all are depraved;
there is not one that does good, no not one.
5 Will they never learn, all the evildoers,
who eat up My people like eating bread,
and never call upon God?
6 They tremble with fear where there is nothing to fear,
for God scatters the bones of the men-pleasers;
they are put to shame because God rejects them.
7 Who will give salvation to Israel out of Zion?
When the Lord restores the captives of His people,
Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad.

PSALM 53

Song of Faith in God's Full Redemption
Faith Sees and Receives the Answer

1 (*With songs. Of contemplation. By David; when the Ziphites came and told Saul that David was hiding among them*)

2 O God, save me by Thy Name,
3 and judge me by Thy power.[1]
4 Hear my prayer, O God;
give ear to the words of my mouth.
5 For strangers have risen against me,
and the mighty have sought my life
and have not set God before them.
6 Behold, God is helping me;
the Lord is the defender of my soul.
7 He will turn the evils upon my enemies.[2]
Destroy them in Thy truth.
8 I will freely sacrifice to Thee;
I will praise Thy Name, O Lord, for it is good.[3]
9 For Thou hast delivered me out of all my trouble,
and my eye has seen the fall of my enemies.[4]

PSALM 54

The Wings of a Dove : Cast your Care on the Lord
Care is a Burden that Stoops the Heart

1 (*A Prayer of Contemplation. By David*)

2 Give ear, O God, to my prayer,
and despise not my petition.
3 Attend to me and hear me.
I am grieved by my trial, and am troubled,

[1] 'The suffering of the Prophet David is a type of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the power of God's judgment human weakness is rescued to bear God's name and nature . . . as the reward of His obedience He is exalted to the saving protection of God's name. The Son of Man was to have the name and power of the Son of God restored to Him by the power of judgment' (St. Hilary). cp. Rom. 1 : 2-4.

[2] 'They found, in ruin and destruction by famine and war, their reward for crucifying God and condemning the Lord of Life to death. . . . The Truth of God destroyed them when He rose to resume the majesty of His Father's glory' (St. Hilary).

[3] We rejoice in praising God because God is our joy and to praise Him is itself a joy.

[4] Lk. 10 : 18; 2 Thess. 1 : 6.

4 because of the voice of the enemy,
and because of the oppression of the sinner;
for they have cast a slur upon me,
and have boiled with anger against me.
5 My heart was troubled within me,
and fear of death fell upon me.
6 Fear and trembling came upon me,
and darkness overwhelmed me.
7 And I said: 'Who will give me wings like a dove,
and I will fly away and be at rest?'[1]
8 Lo, far have I fled,
and have camped in the desert.
9 I waited for Him Who saves me
from faint-heartedness and from storm.
10 Drown their voices, O Lord, and divide their tongues,
for I see only iniquity and strife in the city.
11 Day and night they make the round of its walls.
Iniquity and trouble are in the midst of it,
12 and injustice;
usury and fraud never leave its streets.
13 For if an enemy had reproached me,
I could have borne it.
And if one who hated me had boasted against me,
I would have hidden myself from him.
14 But it was you, a man my equal,
my sovereign, and my friend,
15 who made sweet the food we shared together.
We walked to the house of God in harmony.
16 Let death come upon them,
and let them go down alive to hell;
for evil is in their hearts and homes.
17 As for me, I cried to God,
and the Lord heard me.
18 In the evening and morning and at noon
I will tell and declare my needs
and He will hear my voice.
19 He will redeem my soul in peace
from those who come near me,
for they were in crowds about me.

[1] 'I will fly by activity and be at rest by contemplation and humility.' (St. John Climacus, Ladder 4: 1)

20 God will hear and will humble them,
He Who is before the ages. (*Pause*)
There is no change of heart for them,
for they do not fear God.

21 He has stretched out His hand to requite them.
They have profaned His covenant.

22 They were divided by the wrath of His countenance,
and their hearts drew near.
Their words are smoother than oil,
and yet they are swords.

23 Cast your care on the Lord,[1]
and He will support you.
He will never let a just man stumble.

24 But Thou, O God, wilt bring them
into the pit of destruction.
Men of blood and deceit
will not live half their days.
But I will trust in Thee, O Lord.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 8

PSALM 55

The Victory of Faith over Fear
I will Live to Please the Lord

1 (*For people far removed from holy things. By David, for a pillar inscription, when the Philistines held him at Gath*)

2 Be merciful to me, O God,
for man tramples upon me;
all day long he fights and oppresses me.

3 My enemies trample on me all day long;
and many there are
who war against me from on high.[2]

4 The days ahead I will not fear,
but I will trust in Thee.

5 In God—I praise His promises to me—
in God I have put my trust; I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me ?

[1] cp. 1 Peter 5 : 7.
[2] cp. Ephes 6 : 12; 1 Tim 4 : 1; Rev. 16 : 14.

6 All day long they execrate my words;
all their thoughts are against me for evil.
7 They keep close and lurk in hiding;
they watch my steps
as if they are waiting for my soul.
8 Thou wilt save them for extinction;[1]
Thou wilt bring such people down in anger.
9 O God, I have told Thee my life;
Thou hast set my tears before Thee,
according to Thy promise.
10 All my enemies will turn back
on the day when I call upon Thee.
This I know, that Thou art my God.
11 In God—I will praise His Word—
in the Lord—I will praise His Word—
12 In Thee I have put my trust; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
13 I am under vows to Thee, O God;
I will pay Thee my due of praise.
14 For Thou hast delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears and my feet from slipping.
I will live to please the Lord
in the light of the living.

PSALM 56

Two Environments: Wings and Lions
In the Midst of Lions : My Heart is Ready, I will Sing

1 (*Do not destroy. By David, for a pillar inscription, when he fled from Saul to the cave*)
2 Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me;
for my soul trusts in Thee,
and in the shadow of Thy wings I will trust
till the iniquity passes.
3 I will cry to God Most High,
to God my benefactor.
4 He sent from heaven and saved me;
He delivered my oppressors to reproach.[2] (*Pause*)
God sent His mercy and His truth.

[1] Any false light or life will be saved only to be extinguished later if there is no change or repentance.

[2] Saul incurred reproach when he fell into David's hands in the cave, for David did not injure him but merely cut off the tip of his cloak (1 Sam. 24).

5 He delivered my soul from the midst of lions.
I slept, troubled as I was.
As for the sons of men,
their teeth are spears and arrows,
and their tongue is a sharp sword.
6 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
and Thy glory over all the earth.
7 They prepared a trap for my feet,
and they bowed down my soul.
They dug a pit before me,
and fell into it themselves. (*Pause*)
8 My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready;
I will sing and chant psalms with my glory.[1]
9 Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp!
I will rise early.
10 I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to Thee among the nations.
11 For great is Thy mercy reaching to the heavens,
and Thy truth to the clouds.
12 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
and Thy glory over all the earth.[2]

PSALM 57

God's Judgment is True Government
The Doom of Wicked Judges and Rulers

1 (*Do not destroy. By David, for a pillar inscription*)
2 Do you truly speak righteousness?
Do you judge justly, you sons of men?
3 No, in heart you do wrong in the earth;
your hands weave injustice and wrong.
4 Sinners are estranged from the womb;
they go astray as soon as they are born;
they keep telling lies.
5 Their venom is like serpent's poison;
they are like a deaf cobra that stops its ears,
6 so as not to hear the snake-charmer's voice,
but is spell-bound when charmed by a wise man.

[1] *glory*, i.e., with all my soul and spirit (see Ps. 29 : 13).
[2] Verses 8-12 are repeated almost verbatim in Ps. 107 : 2-6.

7 God crushes their teeth in their mouths;
the Lord crushes the lions' grinders.
8 They will come to nothing like leaking water;
He will bend His bow until they weaken.
9 Like melting wax they will be consumed;
fire falls on them, and they are blind to the sun.
10 Before their prickles grow to a thorn-tree,
He devours them alive as it were in His wrath.
11 The righteous will rejoice
when he sees the vengeance;
he will wash his hands
in the blood of the sinner.
12 And men will say:
'There is indeed a reward for the righteous;
there is surely a God
Who judges those on the earth.' *Glory....*

PSALM 58

Love Rules the Universe
I will Sing of Thy Power

1 (*Do not destroy. By David, for a pillar inscription, when Saul sent men to watch his house and kill him*)
2 Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
and redeem me from those who rise up against me.
3 Rescue me from evildoers,
and save me from men of blood.
4 For see, they hunt my soul,
the mighty set upon me!
It is not my fault or my sin, O Lord.
5 I have run without fault
and have kept straight.
Awake to meet and help me and see.
6 Thou then, O Lord God of hosts, God of Israel,
take care to visit all the nations;
show all the evildoers no mercy. (*Pause*)
7 They will return at nightfall, hungry as dogs,
and will prowl round the city.
8 Behold, they speak with their mouth
and a sword is in their lips—
for 'Who,' they think, 'will hear us?'

9 But Thou, O Lord, wilt laugh at them;
Thou wilt bring to nothing all the nations.
10 O my strength, I watch for Thee;
for Thou, O God, art my protector.
11 My God, His mercy goes before me;
my God will show me His mercy among my enemies.
12 Slay them not, lest they forget Thy law;
scatter them by Thy power
and bring them down, O Lord my defender.
13 Every word of their lips is a sin of their mouth;
so let them be caught in their pride.
And by their cursing and lying
they will be known in the end.
14 In the final wrath they will cease to be;
and they will know that God rules Jacob
and the ends of the earth. (*Pause*)
15 They will return at nightfall, hungry as dogs,
and will prowl round the city.
16 They will scatter in search of food;
and they will growl when they are not satisfied.
17 But I will sing of Thy power,
and will rejoice at Thy mercy in the morning;
for Thou hast been my protector
and my refuge in the day of my distress.
18 Thou art my helper, to Thee I will sing;
for Thou, O God, art my protector, my God, my mercy.[1]

PSALM 59

Prayer After a Defeat
Earth-shaking Catastrophe

1 (*For those who are still to be changed. For a pillar inscription, by David:*
2 *For teaching; when he burned Syrian Mesopotamia and Syrian Zobah, and Jacob returned and defeated* 12,000 *Edomites in the Valley of Salt.*)
3 O God, Thou didst reject us and crush us.
Thou wast angry, but hast had compassion on us.
4 Thou hast shaken the earth and troubled it;
heal its wounds, for it is tottering.
5 Thou hast shown Thy people hard things;
Thou hast made us drink the wine of compunction.

[1] Mercy: love (Luke 10:37).

6 Thou hast given those who fear Thee a signal [1]
to escape from before the bow. (*Pause*)
7 That Thy beloved may be delivered,
save with Thy right hand and answer me.
8 God has spoken in His sanctuary:
'I will rejoice and divide Shekem,
and parcel out the valley of tents.
9 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine,
and Ephraim is the strength of My head;
Judah is My King.
10 Moab I hope to make My washbowl,[2]
over Edom I will extend my sway,[3]
strangers will submit to Me.'
11 Who will lead me to the fortified city?
Or who will guide me to Edom?
12 Wilt not Thou, O God, Who hast rejected us?
Wilt not Thou, O God, go out with our armies?
13 Grant us help from our trouble,
for vain is the salvation of man.
14 In God we shall win a mighty victory,[4]
and He will bring to nothing our oppressors.

PSALM 60

An Exile's Prayer of Faith
Love Lifted me to the Rock Sanctuary

1 (*With songs. By David*)
2 Hear, O God, my supplication;
attend to my prayer.
3 From the ends of the earth I cry to Thee
when my heart is despondent.
Thou hast lifted me high on a rock;
Thou hast guided me.
4 For Thou art my hope,
a tower of strength
from the face of the enemy.

[1] cp. Lk. 21:20-24. Warning signals were lit on mountain tops in times of danger.
[2] Washbowl: i.e. reduced to the most menial servitude.
[3] Extend my sway: *lit.* stretch my shoe (cp. Deut. 11:24). Psalm 59:7-14 differs only in 3 words from 107:7-14.
[4] win a mighty victory: *lit.* create power *or* work a miracle *or* do a mighty work.

5 I will dwell in Thy sanctuary for ever.
I will take cover in the shelter of Thy wings. (*Pause*)
6 For Thou, O God, hast heard my prayers;
Thou hast given an inheritance
to those who fear Thy name.
7 Thou wilt add days to the days of the King,
and prolong his years to the day of eternity.
8 He will continue for ever in the presence of God.
Who will search out His mercy and truth?
9 So I will sing praise to Thy name for ever,
that I may perform my vows from day to day.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 61

The Two are One : Power that is Love
God Repays Everyone According to his Works

1 (*For Jeduthun. A Psalm by David*)
2 Shall not my soul submit to God?
For from Him is my salvation.
3 For He is my God and my Saviour;
with Him as my Protector
I shall not be greatly shaken.
4 How long will you all attack a man
to murder him and knock him down
like a leaning wall or a toppling fence?
5 They only plan to impugn my honour;
they run in thirst.
They bless with their mouth,
but curse with their heart. (*Pause*)
6 But submit to God, my soul,
for from Him is my patience.
7 For He is my God and my Saviour;
He is my Protector, I will not yield.
8 My salvation and my glory depend on God;
He is the God of my help,
and my hope is in God.
9 Trust in Him, all you assemblies of people;
pour out your hearts before Him,
for God is our helper. (*Pause*)

10 But vain are the sons of men;
the sons of men are liars
and cheat with their scales;[1]
they themselves, the whole brood,[2]
are sons of vanity.
11 Put no hope in dishonesty
and have no longing for plunder;
if riches flow in,
set not your heart on them.
12 God spoke once, these two things I heard:[3]
That power belongs to God.
13 And to Thee, O Lord, belongs mercy.
For Thou wilt repay everyone
according to his works.

PSALM 62

A Song of the Desert
I Thirst for Thee: Thy Love is Better than Life

1 *(A Psalm by David, when he was in the desert of Judah)*
2 O God, my God, I rise early and pray to Thee.
My soul thirsts for Thee,
and in how many ways my flesh longs for Thee,
in a desolate land, trackless and waterless.
3 So I appear before Thee in the sanctuary
to see Thy power and Thy glory.
4 For Thy love is better than life;
my lips shall praise Thee.
5 So I will bless Thee as long as I live,
and lift up my hands in Thy name.
6 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
and my mouth praises Thee with joyful lips,
7 when I remember Thee on my bed,
and meditate on Thee in the morning.
8 For Thou hast been my Helper,
and in the shelter of Thy wings I rejoice.
9 My soul is glued[4] to Thee;
and Thy right hand holds me tight.

[1] Cp. Lev. 19:35-37; Deut. 25:13-16; Ezek. 45:10; Mic. 6:10, 11; Prov. 11:1.
[2] Cp. 'brood of vipers' (Matt. 12:34; 23:33).
[3] Job. 33:14.
[4] 'What is this glue? It is love,' says St. Augustine.

10 But those who seek to destroy my soul
shall go into the underworld.
11 They shall be delivered to the edge of the sword,
they shall be morsels for foxes.
12 But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by Him shall be praised,
for the mouth of those who tell lies shall be stopped.

PSALM 63

The Defeat of God's Enemies : Fear of Fear runs to God
A Man will Come Whose Heart is Deep and God will be Exalted

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
2 O God, hear my cry when I pray to Thee;
deliver my soul from fear of the enemy.
3 Thou protectest me from the swarm of evildoers,
from the crowd of those whose work is iniquity,
4 whose tongues are as sharp as swords,
who bend their bow to shoot a bitter word
5 at an innocent man in secret.
Suddenly they shoot him down without a qualm.
6 They encourage one another in an evil design;
they talk of hiding snares.
They say, ' Who will see them ? '
7 They search out iniquity;
they fail in their search.
A man will come whose heart is deep,
8 and God will be exalted.
Their blows are the dart of babes,
9 and their tongues are feeble against him.
All who see them are troubled.
10 Then every man is afraid,
and they declare the works of God
and understand His actions.
11 The righteous man will rejoice in the Lord,
and will trust in Him;
and all the upright in heart will be praised.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 9

PSALM 64

A Springtime Song: Showers of the Holy Spirit
Praise and Thanksgiving for Abundant Harvests

1 *(A Psalm by David)*

2 Praise is due to Thee, O God, in Zion;
and prayer shall be offered to Thee in Jerusalem.

3 Hear my prayer;
to Thee all flesh will come.

4 The words of sinners overwhelm us,
but Thou wilt pardon our impieties.

5 Blessed is he whom Thou hast chosen
and taken to Thyself;
he shall dwell in Thy courts.
We shall be filled with the blessings of Thy house;
holy is Thy temple, wonderful in holiness.[1]

6 Hear us, O God our Saviour,
the hope of all the ends of the earth,
and of those who are far away at sea;

7 Who upholdest the mountains in Thy strength,
Who art surrounded with power;

8 Who stirrest the depths of the sea
and stillest its roaring waves.[2]

9 The nations are alarmed
and those who inhabit the remotest parts
are afraid at the signs of Thy presence.
Thou makest sunrise and sunset a joy and delight.

10 Thou dost visit the earth and water it;
Thou givest ample means for enriching it.
The river of God is full of water.
Thou providest the supply,
for such is Thy provision.

11 Water the furrows, grant bumper crops;
they will spring up and rejoice in the showers.

12 Thou wilt bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness,
and the fields will be full of fat stock.

[1] *Lit.* wonderful in righteousness (but cp. Exod. 15:11).
[2] So the Slavonic (Greek often omits 'stillest').

13 The desert ranges will yield luxuriantly,
and the hills will wear girdles of joy.
14 The rams of the flocks will grow thick coats,
and the valleys will stand deep in corn.
They will shout and sing.

PSALM 65

You are My Witnesses

Praise and Thanksgiving for Answered Prayer

1 (*A Song of a Psalm of Resurrection*[1])
Shout the song of victory to God, all the earth.[2]
2 Sing to His name; give glory to His praise.
3 Say to God: 'How tremendous are Thy works!'
At the greatness of Thy power
Thy enemies play false with Thee.[3]
4 Let all the earth[2] worship Thee,
and sing to Thee;
let them sing to Thy Name, O Most High. (*Pause*)
5 Come and see the works of God,[4]
tremendous in His plans[5]
for the sons of men,
6 Who turns the sea into dry land;
they pass through the river on foot.
So let us rejoice in Him
7 Who rules by His eternal power.
His eyes watch over the nations.[6]
Let not those who grieve Him
be exalted in themselves. (*Pause*)
8 Bless our God, you nations,
and let the sound of His praise be heard,

[1] The return from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem; and then the return of every soul from sin to grace and virtue.

[2] A prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles. 'Just as the Jews were delivered from slavery to the Babylonians, so by the incarnation of the Saviour all peoples were delivered from the cruel power of the devil' (Theodoret).

[3] play false: *or* lie. It may mean they kow-tow or submit in pretence, acting a lie.

[4] 'He Who did signs and wonders when He came in the flesh is the same God Who of old dried up the Red Sea and divided the streams of Jordan so that the Israelites could pass through on dry land' (St Athanasius the Great).

[5] 'What God has planned for His lovers' (1 Cor. 2:9).

[6] The Shepherd of Israel watches over His human flock as shepherds were watching their flocks when the same good Shepherd was born in Bethlehem (Lk. 2:8).

9 Who has restored my soul to life
and has not allowed my feet to stumble.
10 For thou, O God, hast proved us;
Thou hast tried us as silver is tried.
11 Thou didst bring us into the trap;[1]
Thou didst lay afflictions on our backs.
12 Thou didst set men over our heads;
we passed through fire and water,
but Thou hast brought us to revival.
13 I will enter Thy house with whole burnt offerings;
I will pay Thee my vows,
14 which my lips framed
and my mouth uttered in my affliction.
15 I will offer Thee costly sacrifices,
with incense and rams;
I will offer Thee bullocks and goats. (*Pause*)
16 Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell you what He has done for my soul.
17 I cried to Him with my mouth,
and praised Him under my tongue.[2]
18 If I have contemplated sin in my heart,
may the Lord not answer me.
19 But that is why God has answered me;
He attended to the cry of my prayer.
20 Blessed be God
Who has not rejected my prayer
nor turned His mercy from me.

PSALM 66

The Smile of Grace
Prayer for the Expansion of God's Kingdom

1 (*With songs. A Psalm of a Song*)
2 May God have compassion on us and bless us;
and may He manifest His presence to us,[3]
and have mercy on us.

[1] Captivity to hostile powers is the devil's trap. Cp. Matt. 6:13, 'Do not bring us to trial or temptation.'

[2] No sooner had I cried to God vocally than I was mentally praising and thanking Him for answering me.

[3] Presence: *or*, face. The face of the Father is the Son. 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). Thus, this psalm is a prayer for the incarnation (cp. 2 Cor. 4:6).

3 That Thy way may be known on earth,
Thy salvation among all nations.
4 Let the peoples give thanks to Thee, O God;
let all the peoples give thanks to Thee.
5 Let the nations be glad and rejoice;
for Thou wilt judge the peoples justly,
and guide the nations on earth. (*Pause*)
6 Let the peoples give thanks to Thee, O God;
let all the peoples give thanks to thee.
7 The earth has yielded her fruit;[1]
may God, our own God, bless us.
8 May God bless us;
and may all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 67

Triumphal March of God's People
God scatters All who Delight in War

1 (*A Psalm of a Song by David*)

2 Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered;
and let those who hate Him fly from his face.[2]
3 As smoke vanishes, let them vanish;
as wax melts at the presence of fire,
so let the sinners perish at the presence of God.
4 But let the righteous be glad
and rejoice in the presence of God;
let them exult with delight and gladness.
5 Sing to God, sing praises to His Name;
make a way for Him who rides upon the sunsets;[3]
the Lord is His name, and rejoice before Him.
6 They will be alarmed at the presence of Him
Who is the father of orphans
and the judge of widows.
God is in His sanctuary.

[1] Mary has borne Jesus. 'Thou hast been seen, O soil untilled, bearing the corn of life' (Oktoechos).
[2] Numbers 10:35. Cp. Exodus 14.
[3] The sunset is His own death, over which He rose by His Resurrection (St Gregory the Dialogist, Mor. 19:3).

7 God settles the solitary in His house,
and releases prisoners with power:
likewise the rebellious who dwell in tombs.
8 O God, at Thy marching out at the head of Thy people,
at Thy crossing through the wilderness, (*Pause*)
9 the earth shook and the heavens dripped
at the presence of the God of Sinai,
at the presence of the God of Israel.
10 Thou didst grant a gracious rain, O God, to Thy inheritance,
which was weak, but Thou didst restore it.
11 There Thy living people find a home
prepared in Thy goodness, O God, for the poor.
12 The Lord will give the word
to those who preach the Gospel with great power.[1]
13 The king of the forces of the Beloved
will grant them to divide the spoils
with the beauty of the house.
14 Even if you sleep among the farms,[2]
you will be like a dove
whose wings are covered with silver
and her back with the lustre of gold.
15 When the Heavenly One commissions kings over it,
they will be white as the snow on Salmon.
16 The mountain of God is a rich mountain,
a mountain of curds, a rich mountain.
17 Why do you imagine mountains of curds?
This is the mountain in which God is pleased to dwell;
for the Lord will dwell in it for ever.
18 The chariots of God are composed of myriads,
thousands of victors;
the Lord is in them as in the sanctuary on Sinai.
19 Thou hast ascended on high,
Thou hast taken gifts to men,[3]
so as to dwell even in unbelievers.

[1] Luke 4:32.

[2] *Or:* 'Even though you have slept among the allotments.' Hebrew may mean: 'camp fire-places.' The passage is obscure, but may refer to the Reubenite slackers who stayed on their farms and refused to fight (Judges 5:16). The beauty or beauties of verse 13 are the women with whom the spoils were shared.

[3] Cp. Ephes. 4:8.

20 Blessed be the Lord God,
blessed be the Lord from day to day;
the God of our salvation will prosper us. (*Pause*)
21 Our God is the God to save,
and the ways out of death are the Lord's.
22 But God will crush the heads of His enemies,
the hairy scalp of those who persist in their sins.
23 The Lord said: 'I will return from Bashan,
I will return through the depths of the sea;
24 that your feet may be bathed in blood,
and the tongues of your dogs lick the blood of His enemies.'
25 Thy processions, O God, have been seen—
the processions of my God, the King, in the sanctuary.
26 The rulers went in front, followed by the singers,
while between them were damsels playing on timbrels.
27 Bless God in the churches;
praise the Lord from the fountains of Israel.
28 There is Benjamin the younger in ecstasy;
the princes of Juda are their leaders,
the princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nephthali.
29 Command Thy power, O God;
strengthen, O God, what Thou hast wrought in us.
30 From Thy temple in Jerusalem,
kings will offer gifts to Thee.
31 Rebuke the beasts of the reed,
the herd of bulls with the cows of the peoples,
that those who have been tried with silver may not be shut out;
scatter the nations that desire wars.[1]
32 Ambassadors will come from Egypt;
Ethiopia will hasten to stretch out her hand to God.
33 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth;
sing to the Lord. (*Pause*)
34 Sing to God Who rides upon the heaven of heaven to the East;
lo, He gives to His voice a thunderous sound.[2]
35 Give glory to God;
His magnificence is over Israel,
and His power is in the clouds.
36 God is wonderful in His Saints, the God of Israel.
He will give strength and power to His people.
Blessed be God! *Glory . . . .*

[1] Desire wars: *or* delight in wars.
[2] Thunderous sound: *Lit.* sound of power.

PSALM 68

Cry from the Depths: Christ's Passion Foreshadowed
Praise for the Vision of the Universal Worship of Creation

1 *(For those who are to be changed. By David)*

2 Save me, O God;
for the waters have entered even my soul.
3 I am stuck in deep mire, and there is no foothold;[1]
I have come into the depths of the sea,
and a storm has overwhelmed me.
4 I am tired of shouting, my throat is hoarse;
my eyes fail with hoping for my God.
5 Those who hate me without cause
are more than the hairs of my head;
my enemies who persecute me unjustly have grown strong,
I then repaid what I never robbed.[2]
6 O God, Thou knowest my folly,
and my faults are not hidden from Thee.
7 Let not those who trust in Thee be ashamed on my account.
O Lord God of Hosts,
let not those who seek Thee be confused through me,
O God of Israel.
8 It is for Thy sake I have borne reproach
and my face is covered with shame.
9 I have become a stranger to my brothers,
and an alien to my mother's children.
10 Zeal for Thy house consumes Me,
and the insults hurled at Thee fall upon Me.[3]
11 I bowed down my soul with fasting,
and it gave occasion for reproaching me.
12 I made sackcloth my garment;
and I became a byword to them.

[1] *Hypostasis*=substance, standing-ground.
[2] 'He did not die as being Himself liable to death. He suffered for us.... as Isaiah says: "He bore our sicknesses" ' (St. Athanasius the Great).
[3] Mk. 15:29; Jn. 2:17; Rom. 15:3.

13 Those who sat in the gate[1] spoke against me;
and the wine drinkers[2] made me their song.
14 But as for me, O Lord, with prayer to Thee
I await Thy pleasure, O God.
In Thy infinite mercy
answer me with the truth of Thy salvation.
15 Save me from the mud lest I stick there;
deliver me from those who hate me,
and out of the deep waters.
16 May storm waves never drown me,
nor the deep swallow me,
nor the pit close its mouth over me.
17 Hear me, O Lord, for Thy mercy is gracious;
in Thy great compassion look upon me.
18 Turn not away Thy face from Thy servant,
for I am in trouble; hear me speedily.
19 Attend to my soul and redeem it;
deliver me because of my enemies.
20 For Thou knowest my reproach,
my shame, and my confusion;
all who afflict me are before Thee.
21 My soul expected rebuke and suffering;[3]
and I looked for a condoler but there was none,
and for a comforter but I found none.
22 And they gave me gall for my food;
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.[4]
23 Let their table be a snare to them,
a retribution and a stumbling-block.
24 Let their eyes be blinded so they cannot see;
and bend their back continually.[5]
25 Pour out Thy anger upon them,
and let the fury of Thy anger overtake them.

[1] The elders and chief priests.

[2] The soldiers at the Crucifixion drank themselves the spiced wine prepared for the sufferers to deaden the pain, and substituted vinegar. (v. 22). This psalm is a good example of interpenetration, the figure of the Divine Saviour showing through the human figure of the psalmist, whose sufferings are seen as a foreshadowing of Christ's Passion. (*verse* **5**=Jn. 15:25; **13**=Jn. 2:17; **23·4**=Rom. 11:9, 10; **26**=Acts 1:20).

[3] Mt. 16:21; Mk. 8:31.

[4] Mt. 27:34.

[5] Cp. Rom. 11:9, 10.

26 Let their camp be deserted,
and let no one dwell in their tents.
27 For they persecute the one Thou hast struck;
and they add to the pain of My wounds.
28 Add iniquity to their iniquity,
and let them not come into Thy righteousness.
29 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,
and not be enrolled with the righteous.
30 I am poor and in pain;
let Thy salvation help me, O God.
31 I will praise the name of my God with a song;
I will magnify Him with praise.
32 And this will be more pleasing to God
than a young bull with horns and hoofs.
33 Let the poor see and rejoice;
seek God and your soul shall live.
34 For the Lord hears the poor
and does not despise His prisoners.
35 Let heaven and earth praise Him,
the sea and all that moves in them.
36 For God will save Zion,
and the cities of Judah will be built;
and men will dwell there, and inherit it.
37 And the children of His slaves[1] will possess it;
and they who love Thy name will dwell in it.

PSALM 69

The Lord be Magnified, my Helper and Redeemer
Let All Who Seek Thee Rejoice in Thee

1 (*By David, in remembrance that the Lord has saved me*)
2 O God, come to my help;
O Lord, make haste to help me.
3 Let all who seek my life[2]
be put to shame and confounded.
Let all who wish me evil
be turned back and put to shame.
4 Let those who say of me, 'Fine, fine!'
be turned back immediately ashamed.

[1] Thus, by the miracle and mystery of redemption, Saul of Tarsus was changed from a fanatical Pharisee into a devoted slave of the Lord Jesus.
[2] Ps. 69:3-7 differs only slightly from Ps. 39:15-18.

5 Let all who seek Thee
rejoice and be glad in Thee, O God;
and let those who love Thy salvation
say continually, ' The Lord be magnified.'
6 But I am poor and needy;
help me, O God.
7 Thou art my helper and my redeemer;
O Lord, make no delay.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 10

PSALM 70

An Old Man's Prayer for Grace to Witness to Youth
My Song is Continually of Thee

1 (*By David. Sung by the sons of Jonadab and the first captives*)
In Thee, O Lord, I hope and trust;
let me never be put to shame.
2 Rescue me and deliver me in Thy righteousness.[1]
Incline Thine ear to me and save me.
3 Be my God and protector,
and a strong sanctuary to save me;[2]
for thou art my stronghold and my refuge.
4 Deliver me, O God, from the hand of the sinner,
from the clutch of the outlaw and wrongdoer.
5 For Thou art my patience, O Lord;
O Lord, Thou art my hope from my youth.
6 On Thee I have leaned from my birth;
Thou art my protector from my mother's womb;
my song is continually of Thee.
7 I am a wonder to many,
but Thou art my strong helper.
8 Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise,
that I may sing of Thy glory and splendor all day long.
9 Reject me not in my old age;
forsake me not when my strength is failing.

[1] The first three lines of Psalms 70 and 30 are identical. See footnote there.
[2] sanctuary: *lit.* place, Cp. Psalm 131 : 5 and footnote there.

10 For my enemies speak of me,
and those who watch my soul conspire together,
11 saying: 'God has forsaken him;
follow and catch him, for there is no one to save him.'
12 O God, be not distant from me;
my God, draw near and help me.
13 Let those who slander my soul
be confounded and perish;
let those who seek to do me evil
be covered with shame and confusion.
14 But I will hope and trust continually,
and will praise Thee more and more.
15 My mouth will tell of Thy justice
and of Thy salvation all day long,
for I do not know the art of writing.
16 I will enter the Lord's dominion.
O Lord, I will speak of Thy righteousness, Thine alone.
17 O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth,
and still I proclaim Thy wonders.
18 So even when I am old and venerable, O God, forsake me not,
until I tell of Thy power to all the rising generation,
19 Thy power and Thy justice, O God, that reaches to the heights,
and the great things Thou hast done.
O God, Who is like Thee?
20 O how many evils and afflictions Thou hast shown me!
Yet Thou hast returned and revived me,
and hast brought me up again from the depths of the earth.
21 Thou hast lavished upon me Thy greatness,
and hast returned and comforted me,
and hast brought me up again from the depths of the earth.
22 So I will praise Thy truth to Thee with a song, O God;
I will sing to Thee with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.
23 When I sing to Thee my lips will rejoice
and my soul which Thou hast redeemed.
24 And my tongue will tell of Thy justice all day long,
when those who seek to harm me are confounded and put to shame.

[1] Ephes. 3:10; 4:8.

PSALM 71

The King of Peace and His glorious Reign
Final Redemption from All Tyranny and Oppression

1 *(For Solomon)*[1]
O God, give the King Thy judgment,
and Thy justice to the King's Son,
2 to judge Thy people with justice[2]
and give Thy poor their rights.
3 May the mountains bring Thy people peace
and the hills justice and righteousness.
4 He will do justice to the poor of Thy people
and save the children of the needy,
and humble the oppressor.
5 And He will continue as long as the sun
and beyond the moon throughout all generations.
6 He will come down like rain on a fleece
and like a drop that falls on the earth.[3]
7 In His days righteousness will flourish
and lasting peace till the moon is no more.
8 And He will rule from sea to sea,
and from the rivers[4] to the ends of the earth.
9 The Ethiopians will fall down before Him,
and His enemies will lick the dust.
10 The kings of Tarshish[5] and the isles will pay tribute;
the kings of the Arabs and Sabeans will bring gifts.
11 All the kings of the earth will worship Him;
all the nations will serve Him.
12 He will deliver the poor from the tyrant,
and the needy who have no one to help them.
13 He will spare the poor and needy,
and the needy souls He will save.
14 He will redeem their souls from oppression and wrong,
and His name will be precious in their sight.

[1] The true Solomon or Peacemaker is Jesus Christ, Son of King David, to whom alone verses 5-19 truly apply (cp. Ephes. 2:14; Col. 1:20; Mt. 5:9).
[2] Judging and ruling are fused in Hebrew thought (cp. 2 Sam. 7:7; 1 Chron. 17:6). The King is the Messiah and the King's Son is the same person.
[3] Silently as rain falling on wool or a drop of dew on the earth, the Word became the Son of Man (Jn. 1:14). Cp. Job 29:23; Acts 2:17; Jn. 7:39.
[4] Rivers: Tigris and Euphrates.
[5] Cp. Ps. 47:8.

15 He lives,[1] and to Him will be given the gold of Arabia,
and in His name men will pray continually;[2]
all day long they will bless Him.
16 There will be support in the land on the mountain tops;
His fruit will rise above Lebanon,
and they will spring from the city like grass from the earth.
17 May His name be blessed throughout the ages!
His name will continue as long as the sun;
and in Him all the tribes of the earth will be blessed.
All the nations will call Him blessed.
18 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
Who alone does wonders.
19 And blessed be His glorious name in time and eternity,
and may the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen. Amen

(The songs of David the son of Jesse are ended).

Glory....

PSALM 72

Change of Outlook and Vision through Prayer
Heaven and Happiness not the Prosperity of Sinners

1 (*A Psalm by Asaph*)
How good God is to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart!
2 Yet my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
3 For I was envious of the wicked,
when I saw the peace[3] of sinners.
4 For there is no objection[4] in their death,
and in their scourging no severity.
5 They are not in trouble like other men,
nor like other men are they scourged.

[1] Cp. Rev. 1:18; Heb. 7:25; Num. 14:28.
[2] 'Men will name Him in their prayers and ask that through Him the Father will grant His gifts and blessings' (St Athanasius the Great).
[3] peace: Heb. *shalom*=well-being, success, prosperity, security, happiness.
[4] objection: They do not object to dying in sin and they offer no resistance to the devil. (*Variant reading*: revival). Hebrew of verse 4 seems to mean:

For them there are no pains;
fit and strong are their bodies.

6 Therefore pride holds full sway over them;
they are wrapped up in their wrongdoing and wickedness.
7 Their wrongdoing oozes from them like grease;
it passes into a state of heart.
8 They think and speak with malice wickedly,
they speak blasphemy against the Most High.
9 They poke their mouths at heaven,
but their tongues drag in the dirt.
10 So My people will return here,
and full days will be found among them.
11 And they say, 'How can God know?'
And, 'Is there knowledge in the Most High?'
12 These are the sinners, yet they are prosperous;
they are for ever amassing wealth.
13 And I said, 'How useless to keep my heart right
and wash my hands among the innocent,
14 only to be scourged all day long
and rebuked every morning!'
15 Had I said, 'I will speak like that',
I should have betrayed the family of Thy children.
16 So I tried to understand it,
but it proved too hard for me,
17 until I entered God's sanctuary.
Then I understood their ends.
18 It is because of their crooked ways
that Thou inflictest evils upon them.
Thou hurlest them down by their exaltation.
19 How suddenly they come to ruin![1]
They vanish, perish in their sin.
20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord,
Thou wilt reject their phantoms in Thy city.
21 So when my heart was burning
and my thoughts kept changing,
22 I was contemptible without knowing it;
I was like a beast before Thee.
23 Yet I am continually with Thee;
Thou holdest my right hand.

[1] The apparent success and prosperity of the godless is transitory and short-lived.

24 Thou guidest me in Thy will,
and receivest me with glory.
25 For what is there in heaven for me,
and what do I want on earth but Thee?
26 My heart and my flesh fail;
Thou, O God, art the God of my heart
and my portion for ever.[1]
27 Those who divorce themselves from Thee will perish;
Thou destroyest all who are unfaithful to Thee.[2]
28 But my happiness is to cling to God,[3]
to put my trust in the Lord,
that I may declare all Thy praises
in the gates of the daughter of Zion.[4]

PSALM 73

Destruction of the Temple : Thou Hast Wrought Salvation[5]

1 (*Of Contemplation. By Asaph*)

Why, O God, dost Thou utterly reject us?
Why fume in anger at the sheep of Thy pasture?
2 Remember Thy community[6]
which Thou hast acquired of old,
the sceptre of Thy inheritance
which Thou hast redeemed,
this Mount Zion which is Thy dwelling-place.
3 Lift up Thy hands against their perpetual pride,
against all the evil the enemy has done in Thy sanctuary.
4 Those who hate Thee boast
in the midst of Thy festival;
they set up their own standards.

[1] The death of the body is powerless to break the love-forged links of a soul's union with God.

[2] 'unfaithful': *or*, 'who play the wanton from Thee.' Idolatry is adultery or infidelity. Love brooks no rivals (Jas. 4:4-8; Dt. 5:9; Mt. 6:24).

[3] Hebrew : 'The nearness of God is my good.' Cp. Wisdom 3:9; Ecclesiasticus 2:3.

[4] 'The daughter of Zion' is the New Jerusalem which is born of Old Zion. The Church of the New Covenant sprang from the Old Covenant Church (Gal. 4:26).

[5] The salvation of the world was accomplished by the Savior's death, that is the destruction of Christ's bodily temple, foreshadowed in the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem (Jn. 2:19-22; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Rev. 5:9 &c).

[6] *Gk*. synagogue=congregation etc.

5 The signs pointing to the escape above
they do not know.

6 As if felling a forest of trees with axes,
they cut out the doors of the temple;
with hatchet and hammer
they hack it all down.

7 They set fire to Thy sanctuary;
they profane to the ground the dwelling-place of Thy name.

8 The whole brood of them said in their hearts together:
'Come, let us abolish all the festivals of God from the land.'

9 We do not see our signs,[1] there is no longer a prophet,
nor will he acknowledge us any longer.

10 How long, O God, will the enemy taunt us?
Shall the adversary defy Thy name for ever?

11 Why dost Thou withhold Thy hand,
and for ever hide Thy right hand in Thy bosom?

12 Yet God is our eternal King;
He has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst hold the sea by Thy power,
Thou didst crush the heads of the dragons in the water.

14 Thou hast shattered the dragon's heads;
Thou gavest him as food to the peoples of Ethiopia.

15 Thou didst open springs and torrents;
Thou didst dry up swollen rivers.[2]

16 The day is Thine and the night is Thine.
Thou didst prepare the sun and the moon.

17 Thou hast fixed all the bounds of the earth;[3]
summer and spring are Thy creation.

18 Remember this : the enemy blasphemes the Lord,
and foolish people defy Thy name.

19 Do not give to beasts a soul that praises Thee;
forget not for ever the souls of Thy poor.

20 Have regard to Thy covenant,
for earth's dark places are filled with houses of iniquity.

[1] Signs and miracles of God's presence, protection and deliverance.
[2] Swollen rivers : *lit.* rivers (of) Etham. Fathers seem to refer it to the Jordan (Joshua 3:13-17).
[3] *Variant* : Thou hast made all the beautiful things of the earth.

21 Let not the ashamed and downtrodden be turned away;
the poor and needy will praise Thy name.

22 Arise, O God, defend Thy cause;
remember how the fool blasphemes Thee all day long.

23 Forget not the cry of Thy suppliants;
the pride of those who hate Thee mounts continually.

Glory...

PSALM 74

Song of Victory

The True Judge Who Humbles and Exalts

1 (*Do not destroy. A Psalm for a song by Asaph*)

2 We praise and thank Thee, O God,
we praise and thank Thee,
and we call on Thy name.

3 I will tell of all Thy wonders.
When I take time, I will judge aright.

4 The earth and all its inhabitants melt;
it is I who support its pillars. ((*Pause*)

5 I say to the lawless: 'Do not be outrageous;'
and to sinners: 'Do not flaunt your power.

6 Do not flaunt your power on high
and speak unjustly against God.'

7 It is not from East or West that power comes,
nor from the desert or the mountains.

8 For God is judge;
He humbles one and exalts another.

9 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup
of strong wine fully mixed,
and He pours it out of one into another,
yet the dregs of it are never emptied;
all the sinners of the earth drink of them.

10 But I will rejoice for ever,
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob;
and all the power of sinners I will crush,
but the power of the righteous will be exalted.

PSALM 75

Song of Victory
God is Terrible to the Proud but He Saves the Humble

1 (*With hymns. A Psalm by Asaph. An ode to the Assyrian*)

2 God is known in Judah;
His name is great in Israel.
3 His sanctuary is in peace,[1]
and His dwelling in Zion.
4 There He broke the power of the bow,
the shield, and the sword, and war.[2] (*Pause*)
5 Thou enlightenest wonderfully
from the eternal mountains.[3]
6 All the foolish of heart are troubled;
they sleep their sleep,
and none of the men of wealth
find anything in their hands.
7 At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
the riders of horses sink to sleep.
8 Terrible art Thou, and who can resist Thee
when Thy anger is roused?
9 Thou makest judgment heard from heaven;
earth is scared and silent,
10 when God rises for judgment
to save all the meek of the earth. (*Pause*)
11 For the thought of man will confess to Thee;
and the remains of his thought will keep festival to Thee.[4]
12 To the Lord our God make your vows and pay them;
let all around Him bring gifts
13 to Him Who is terrible and claims the spirits of rulers,
and is terrible to the tyrants[5] of the earth.

[1] sanctuary: *lit.* place. Cp. Psalm 131:5 and footnote there. Cp. 72:3.
[2] Cp. Ps. 45:10; Is. 2:4; 11:9; 65:25; Hos. 2:18; Zac. 9:10.
[3] Sinai and Zion, Moses and Christ, the Law and the Gospel enlighten the earth.
[4] Every thought will be confessed to God at judgment. *The remains of thought* is thought brought to purity by what is left of the grace of choice. So far as thought is pure, it shares Thy festivity' (St Athanasius. Cp. 1 Cor. 5:8). *Heb.* Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.
[5] tyrants: *or* kings.

PSALM 76

Remembrance of God's Saving Acts
Changes Doubt into Triumphant Faith

1 (*For Jeduthun. A Psalm by Asaph*)

2 I cry to the Lord with all my voice,
I cry to God with my voice and He attends to me.
3 In the day of my trouble I sought God
with my hands uplifted to Him in the night,
and I was not deceived;
my soul refused to be comforted.
4 I remembered God and was glad;
I mused and my spirit desponded. (*Pause*)
5 My eyes forestalled the watches;
I was troubled and did not speak.
6 I considered the days of old
and remembered the years of past ages.
7 I meditated at night and communed with my heart,
and stirred up my spirit.
8 Will the Lord reject us for ever
and never again be favorable?
9 Or will He cut off His mercy for ever?
Has His promise ended for all generations?
10 Will God forget to have compassion?
Will He withhold His pity in His wrath? (*Pause*)
11 And I said: ' Now I begin to understand;
this change is due to the right hand of the Most High.'
12 I will remember the works of the Lord,
I will recall Thy wonders from the beginning.
13 And I will meditate on all Thy works
and reflect on Thy mighty acts.
14 O God, Thy way is in the Holy One.
Who is a great God like our God?
15 Thou art the God Who does wonders;
Thou hast made known Thy power among the peoples.
16 Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph. (*Pause*)
17 The waters saw Thee, O God;
the waters saw Thee and were afraid,
the depths were troubled.

18 Great was the roar of the waters;
the clouds gave a clap,
for Thy bolts pass through them.
19 The clap of Thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
Thy lightnings lit up the world,
the earth shook and trembled.
20 Thy ways are in the sea,
and Thy paths in many waters;
and Thy footsteps are not known.
21 Thou didst guide Thy people like sheep
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Glory....

KATHISMA 11

PSALM 77

The History of Israel: God's Goodness and Man's Badness
Handing on the Truth from Generation to Generation

1 (*Of Contemplation. By Asaph*)
Attend, my people, to my law;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will speak my mind in parables,[1]
read riddles cryptic since creation.
3 All that we have heard and known
and our fathers have told us,
has not been hidden from their children
4 from one generation to another;
and we will tell our children
the praises of the Lord
and His mighty acts
and the wonders He has done.
5 He raised up a testimony[2] in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which He commanded our fathers
to make known to their children,

[1] The Word Who is the open door and light and key to the riddles of the universe quotes the first line of this verse verbatim and the second line with slight verbal changes thus (Matt. 13:35):
'I will speak My mind in parables.
divulge secrets hidden since creation' (cp. Rev. 3:14).
[2] The Ark of Witness or Testimony, containing the Law which testified to God's will for men, revealing the way of life (Ex. 25:16; 31:18).

that the next generation might know it,
that the children to be born
might rise and tell their children:
7 That they should put their trust in God
and not forget the works of God
but seek His commandments;
8 that they should not be like their fathers,
a crooked and provoking race,
a race that did not set its heart aright
and whose spirit was not loyal to God.
9 The children of Ephraim, though skilled bowmen,
were routed on the day of battle.[1]
10 They did not keep God's covenant,
and refused to walk in His law.
11 They forgot His blessings
and the wonders He had shown them,
12 the wonders He had done in the sight of their fathers
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis.
13 He divided the sea and led them through;
He held the waters together as though in a wineskin.
14 He led them with a cloud by day,
and all the night long by the light of a fire.
15 He split a rock in the wilderness
and gave them drink as from great depths.
16 He brought water out of the rock
and made waters flow like rivers.
17 Yet still they went on sinning against Him;
they provoked the Most High in the desert.
18 And they tempted God in their hearts
by demanding food for their cravings.
19 And they spoke against God and said:
'Can God provide a table in the wilderness?
20 True, He struck a rock so that water gushed out
and torrents overflowed;
but can He also give us bread,
and provide a table for His people?'
21 So the Lord heard and deferred,[2]
and a fire was kindled in Jacob,
and wrath mounted against Israel,

[1] Ephraim=Israel (cp. Hos. 7; Num. 14; 1 Sam. 4).
[2] He deferred giving them the promised food and the Promised Land.

22 because they did not believe in God
or trust in His salvation.
23 Then He commanded the clouds above,
and opened the doors of heaven,
24 and rained upon them manna to eat,
and gave them the bread of heaven.
25 Man ate the bread of Angels;
He sent them food in abundance.
26 He banished the south wind from heaven,
and by His power He brought in a southwest wind.
27 And He rained flesh on them as thick as dust
and winged birds like the sand of the seas.
28 And the birds fell in the midst of their camp,
all round their tents.
29 So they ate and were thoroughly stuffed,
and He brought them their desire.
30 They had not stayed their desire
and the food was still in their mouths
31 when the wrath of God rose against them
and slew the strongest of them,
and laid low the picked men of Israel.
32 Yet for all this they still sinned,
and did not believe in His wonders.
33 Their days slipped by in vanity,
and their years in anxiety.
34 When He slew them, then they sought Him,
and returned and rose to seek God early,
35 and they remembered that God was their helper
and that the Most High was their redeemer.
36 Then they loved Him with their mouth,
and with their tongue they lied to Him.
37 Their heart was not right with Him,
and they were not faithful to His covenant.
38 Yet He Who is compassionate
forgave their sins and did not destroy them;
again and again He averted His anger
and did not let His wrath consume them.
39 He remembered that they were flesh,
a spirit that passes and never returns.

40 How often they provoked Him in the wilderness
and grieved Him in the desert!
41 They turned back and tempted God,
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember His hand,
or the day when He redeemed them
from the hand of the oppressor,
43 how He wrought His signs in Egypt,
and His wonders in the field of Tanis,
44 and turned into blood their rivers and rain-water,
so that they could not drink.
45 He sent them the dog-fly and it devoured them,
and the frog and it destroyed them.
46 And He gave their crops to the mildew,
and the fruit of their labors to the locust.
47 He killed their vines with hail,
and their mulberry trees with frost.
48 And He gave up their cattle to the hail,
and their produce to the fire.
49 He sent upon them His furious wrath,
fury and wrath and trouble,
a visitation of evil angels.
50 He gave free range to His wrath,
He spared not their lives from death
and to death consigned their cattle.
51 And He struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt,
all their labor's first-fruits in the homesteads of Ham.
52 Then He removed His people like a herd of sheep,
and led them like a flock in the wilderness.
53 And He guided them with hope so they were not afraid,
while the sea closed over their enemies.
54 And He brought them to His mountain sanctuary,
to this mountain which His right hand acquired.
55 And He drove out nations from before them,
and gave each his share of land by lot
and settled the tribes of Israel in their homesteads.
56 Yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God,
and did not keep His testimonies.
57 They turned away and broke faith like their fathers,
they twisted like a crooked bow.

58 They provoked Him with their high places
and defied Him with their carved images.

59 God heard of it and disdained them,
and utterly rejected Israel.

60 And He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,
His tent where He dwelt among men.

61 And He delivered their strength into captivity,
and their beauty into the power of their enemies.

62 And He consigned His people to the sword,
and despised His inheritance.

63 Fire consumed their young men,
and their virgins raised no lament.

64 Their priests fell by the sword,
and their widows sang no dirge.

65 Then the Lord awoke as if from sleep,
like a warrior recovered from wine.

66 And He struck His enemies in the rear;
He branded them with eternal disgrace.

67 And He rejected the dwelling of Joseph,
and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.

68 But He chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion which He loved.

69 And He built His sanctuary like the horn of a rhinoceros;[1]
He established it in the land for ever.

70 And He chose His servant David,
and took him from his flocks of sheep—

71 from behind lambing ewes He took him
to shepherd His servant Jacob
and Israel His inheritance.

72 And he shepherded them in the innocence of his heart,
and guided them with the wisdom of his hands.

Glory . . . .

[1] 'The rhinoceros is an invincible animal, because it has on its forehead a sharp horn with which it kills every beast. So the Psalmist says that when God's temple was built, all the nations submitted and yielded to the power that dwelt in it' (St Athanasius).

PSALM 78

Lament Over the Destruction of Jerusalem
Sin invites Enemies to pour into the Holy City

1 (*A Psalm by Asaph*)
O God, the nations have come into Thy inheritance;
they have defiled Thy holy temple;
they have made Jerusalem like a vegetable dump.
2 They have flung Thy servants' corpses
as food for the birds of heaven,
flung the flesh of Thy saints to the beasts of the earth.
3 They have poured out their blood like water
all round Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them.
4 We have become the taunt of our neighbours,
the scorn and derision of those around us.
5 How long, O Lord, wilt Thou be angry?
Will Thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?
6 Vent Thy wrath on nations that do not know Thee,
and on kingdoms that do not invoke Thy name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob
and laid waste his sanctuary.[1]
8 Remember not our old sins;
let Thy compassion swiftly meet us,
for great is our need, O Lord.
9 Help us, O God, our Saviour;
for the glory of Thy name deliver us, O Lord,
and forgive our sins for Thy name's sake,
10 lest the nations say: 'Where is their God?'
And let the nations be repaid before our eyes
with vengeance for Thy servants' blood that has been shed.
11 Let the groans of the prisoners enter Thy presence;
by the greatness of Thy power
protect the children of those who have been slain.
12 Return sevenfold into our neighbours' laps
the insults with which they insult Thee, O Lord.
13 Then we who are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture
will return Thee thanks throughout the ages;
we will declare Thy praise from generation to generation.

[1] sanctuary: *lit.* place. Cp. Psalm 131 : 5 and footnote there.

PSALM 79

I am the Vine, the True Israel[1]
Prayer for the Restoration and Revival of Israel

1 (*For those who are to be changed. A testimony by Asaph. A Psalm for the Assyrian*)

2 Attend, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou Who guidest Joseph[2] like a sheep;
O Thou Who art enthroned on the Cherubim[3], appear.
3 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
bestir Thy power and come to save us.
4 O God, restore us
and let Thy face shine and we shall be saved.
5 O Lord God of hosts,
how long wilt Thou frown at the prayer of Thy servants?
6 How long wilt Thou feed us with the bread of tears
and fill our cup with tears to the brim?
7 Thou hast made us the butt of our neighbours,
and our enemies sneer at us.
8 O Lord God of hosts, restore us
and let Thy face shine, and we shall be saved. (*Pause*)
9 Thou didst lift a vine out of Egypt;
Thou didst drive out the nations and plant it.
10 Thou didst clear the way before it
and plant its roots, and it filled the land.
11 Its shadow covered the mountains
and its boughs the lordly cedars.
12 It stretched out its branches to the sea,
and its off-shoots to the rivers.
13 Why hast Thou torn down its hedge,
so that all who pass that way strip it?
14 The boar from the forest ravages it,
and the lone beast devours it.
15 O God of hosts, return then,
and look from heaven, and behold
and visit this vine and restore it,
16 the vine Thy right hand has planted,
through the Son of Man Whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself.[4]

[1] John 15. [2] Joseph=Israel (Gen. 40 : 23 ; 48 : 15 ; Amos 6 : 6).
[3] 2 Sam. 6 : 2 (LXX).
[4] 'Who is the Son of Man if not our Lord Himself Who so calls Himself in the Gospels?' (St Athanasius). But in verse 18 the same title can refer to the human leader building the Temple or Church of God (cp. Ezra 5 : 2). See Ps. 126 and footnote there.

17 Men have burned it with fire and rooted it up;
they will perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance.
18 Let Thy hand be on Thy right-hand man
and on the son of man whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself.
19 Then we will never forsake Thee again;
revive us and we will call on Thy name.
20 O Lord God of hosts, restore us
and let Thy face shine, and we shall be saved.

PSALM 80

A Song of Redemption
Open your Mouth Wide and I will Fill you with My Spirit

1 (*For the Wine Presses. A Psalm by Asaph*)
2 Exult and rejoice in God our helper;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
3 Take a psalm and sound the drum,
the dulcet harp with the psaltery.
4 Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
on the great day of your festival.
5 For it is a command to Israel,
a decree of the God of Jacob.
6 He made it a testimony in Joseph
when he left the land of Egypt;
he heard a tongue which he did not know.[1]
7 He relieved his back of the burdens,
where his hands had slaved at the basket.
8 'In distress you called upon Me,
and I delivered you;
I answered you in a mysterious storm;[2]
I proved you at the water of conflict. (*Pause*)
9 Listen, My people, and I will warn you.
O Israel, if only you would listen to Me!
10 In you there must be no new or alien god,
no strange god must you worship.
11 For I am the Lord your God
Who brought you up from the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.'

[1] 'What tongue? The voice of God' (St Athanasius).
[2] Exodus 9 : 23; 19 : 16.

12 But My people did not hear My voice,[1]
and Israel did not attend to Me.
13 So I left them to their hearts' desires:
'Let them go their own ways.'
14 If only My people had listened to Me,
if Israel had walked in My ways,
15 I would have humbled their enemies in on time,
and would have laid My hand on their oppressors.
16 The enemies of the Lord lie to Him,
and their doom will be eternal.
17 And He fed them with the finest wheat,
and filled them with honey from the rock.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 81

The Judge of Judges, King of Kings
The Court of Lords

1 (*A Psalm by Asaph*)
God stands in the assembly of judges,[2]
and in our midst He judges rulers.[2]
2 'How long will you judge unjustly,
and take bribes from sinners? (*Pause*)
3 Do justice to the orphan and poor man;
deal fairly with the humble and destitute.
4 Rescue the poor and needy;
deliver him from the clutch of the sinner.
5 They do not know or understand,
they grope about in darkness;
all the props of earth collapse.[3]
6 I have said: 'You are gods
and all sons of the Most High.'[4]

[1] 'You have always been deaf to His voice, blind to the vision of Him' (Jn. 5 : 37; cp. Deut. 18 : 16; Isaiah 48 : 18).

[2] *Lit.* gods. In the O.T. judges and rulers are called 'gods' (= lords) because they act for God and in His name (cp. Ex. 21 : 6; 22 : 9, 28; Deut. 1 : 17; 19 : 17; Ps. 57; John 10 : 34-35). In verse 6 God says: You are My representatives, clothed with My power, to administer justice to all alike. But your high office is no guarantee of immortality; if you sin, you die (verse 7).

[3] Cp. Isaiah 36 : 6; 2 Chron. 32 : 8; 1 Tim. 6 : 17; Ps. 74 : 4; Gal. 2 : 9; 1 Sam. 2 : 8.

[4] John 10 : 34-36.

7 But you will die like men
and will fall like one of the princes.'
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth;[1]
for Thou shalt have an inheritance in all the nations.

PSALM 82

A Cry for Help Against a World in Arms
Shame inflames to Seek God's Name

1 (*Song of a Psalm by Asaph*)
2 O God, who can be compared to Thee?
Be not silent and still, O God.
3 For, lo, Thy enemies make a tumult,
and those who hate Thee lift their heads.
4 They make wicked plots against Thy people
and conspire against Thy saints.
5 They say: 'Come, let us wipe them out from being a nation,
and let the name of Israel be remembered no more.'
6 For with one consent they conspire together;
they have made a league against Thee.
7 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagarites,
8 Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
and the Philistines with the people of Tyre.
9 Assyria has also jointed them;
they have come to help the sons of Lot. (*Pause*)
10 Treat them like Midian and Sisera,
like Jabin at the torrent of Kishon.
11 They perished at Endor;
they became like dung for the earth.
12 Make their rulers like Oreb and Zeb,
and all their princes like Zeba and Zalmunna,
13 who said, 'Let us take for ourselves
the sanctuary of God.'
14 My God, make them like a whirl of dust,
like stubble before the wind,
15 like fire that burns the forest,
like a flame that sets mountains ablaze.
16 So pursue them with Thy tempest,
and confound them with Thy wrath.

[1] This prayer is already answered (John 3 : 18; 9 : 39; 12 : 31; Acts 17 : 31).

17 Fill their faces with shame,
and they will seek Thy name, O Lord.
18 Let them be ashamed and confounded for ever;
let them be put to confusion and perish.
19 And let them know that Thy name is Lord,
that Thou alone art the Most High over all the earth.

PSALM 83

The Grace and Glory of God's House
A Pilgrim's Love Song and Act of Faith

1 (*For the wine presses. A Psalm for the sons of Korah*)
2 How I love[1] Thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts!
3 My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord,
my heart and my flesh exult in the living God.
4 For even the sparrow finds a home,
and the dove a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
Thy altars, O Lord of Hosts,
my King and my God.
5 Blessed are they who dwell in Thy house;
they will praise Thee eternally. (*Pause*)
6 Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee,
who has resolved in his heart to ascend by steps
7 in the valley of tears, in the place he has made.[2]
For the Lawgiver will indeed give blessings.
8 They will go from power to power.
The God of gods will be seen in Zion.
9 O Lord God of Hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob. (*Pause*)
10 Behold, O God, our defender;
and look on the face of Thy Christ.
11 For one day in Thy courts is better than thousands without.[3]
I would choose rather to be an outcast
in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of sinners.

[1] *Ltt.* 'How beloved are Thy dwellings.'
[2] Man has made a mess of the earth (Gen. 3 ; Isaiah 24 : 4-6 etc.)
[3] Cp. Lk. 13 : 25 ; Mk. 4 : 11 ; Col. 4 : 5 ; Rev. 22 : 15.

12 For the Lord loves mercy and truth.
God will give grace and glory.
No blessing will the Lord withhold
from those who live in innocence.
13 O Lord God of Hosts,
blessed is the man who trusts in Thee.

PSALM 84

Praise, Prophecy and Prayer for Conversion
The Glory of God's Presence and Reign of Peace

1 (*A Psalm for the Sons of Korah*)
2 O Lord, Thou hast blessed Thy land;
Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.
3 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people;
Thou hast covered all their sins.[1] (*Pause*)
4 Thou hast stopped all Thy wrath;
Thou hast turned away the heat of Thine anger.
5 Convert us, O God our Saviour;
and turn away Thine anger from us.
6 Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever,
or prolong Thy wrath from generation to generation?
7 O God, Thou wilt convert and quicken us,
and Thy people will rejoice in Thee.
8 Show us Thy mercy, O Lord,
and grant us Thy salvation.
9 I will hear what the Lord God will speak within me;
for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints,
and to those who turn their hearts to Him.
10 For His salvation is near those who fear Him,
that His glory may dwell in our land.
11 Mercy and truth have met together;
justice and peace have kissed each other.
12 Truth has sprung from the earth,
and justice has looked down from heaven.
13 For the Lord will give goodness,
and our land will yield her fruit.
14 Righteousness will go before Him,
and will set His footsteps on the way.

Glory . . . .

[1] God is love. Love covers all sins (see 1 Jn. 4 : 16 ; 1 Pet. 4 : 8 ; Prov. 10 : 12 ; Jas. 5 : 20; Lk. 7 : 47).

KATHISMA 12

PSALM 85

A Song of the Lamb: Prayer for Joy as Proof of God's Grace
Prophecy that All Nations will Worship and Glorify Him

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
2 Preserve my soul, for I am holy;[1]
O my God, save Thy servant, who trusts in Thee.
3 Have mercy on me, O Lord;
for all day long I cry to Thee.
4 Rejoice the soul of Thy servant;
for to Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.[2]
5 For Thou, O Lord, art good and gentle,
and rich in mercy to all who call on Thee.
6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
and attend to the cry of my supplication.
7 In the day of my trouble I call upon Thee,
for Thou dost answer me.
8 There is none like Thee among the gods, O Lord,
and no works like Thine.
9 All the nations Thou hast made
will come and worship Thee, O Lord,
and will glorify Thy Name.[3]
10 For Thou art great and workest wonders;
Thou art the only God.
11 Teach me Thy way, O Lord,
and I will walk in Thy truth;
let my heart rejoice to fear Thy Name.
12 I will thank Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart;
I will glorify Thy Name for ever.
13 For great is Thy mercy towards me,
and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

[1] holy: cp. 1 Cor. 3 : 16, 17 ; 6 : 15-19 ; Heb. 3 : 1 ; 12 : 10 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 15, 16 ; 2 Pet. 1-4.
[2] Powers of the soul are will, desire, intellect, understanding, memory, imagination.
[3] 'The song of the Lamb.' (Rev. 15 : 3-5 ; John 12 : 32).

14 O God, the lawless have risen against me,
and a band of violent men have sought my life,
and have not set Thee before them.

15 But Thou, O Lord my God, art full of compassion and pity,
long-suffering, most merciful and true.

16 Look upon me and have mercy on me:
give Thy strength to Thy servant,
and save the son of Thy handmaid.

17 Work with me a miracle for good,
and let those who hate me see it and be ashamed,
because Thou, O Lord, hast helped me and comforted me.

PSALM 86

The Celestial City of God, Mother of All Nations
The Kingdom of Righteousness, Peace and Joy

1 (*For the sons of Korah. The Psalm of a song*)
His foundations are on the holy mountains.

2 The Lord loves the gates of Zion[1]
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are said of you, O city of God. (*Pause*)

4 I will mention Rahab[2] and Babylon to those who know me.
And behold, foreigners and the people of Tyre and Ethiopia,
these were born there.

5 A man will say, 'Mother Zion,'
and, 'This man was born in her,'
and, 'The Most High Himself founded her.'

6 The Lord will declare this in His record of the peoples
and rulers who were born in her. (*Pause*)

7 How happy are all whose home is in you![3]

[1] Zion is a type of the Church; the dwelings of Jacob signify life under the law (cp. St. Athanasius). Happy are they who are born of water and the Spirit and whose home is the heavenly Zion! (cp. Jn. 3 : 3-5). See also Ps. 136 and footnotes. 'His foundations' (Ephes. 2 : 20 ; Isaiah 28 : 16).

[2] Rahab (*Heb.*)=Pride. Mythical monster of chaos at creation (Job 24 : 12) and at redemption from Egypt (Is. 51 : 9). Poetic synonym for Egypt (Is. 30 : 7).

[3] 'Whatever God now gives us, He himself will be to us in place of His gift . . . . Our joy, our peace, our rest, the end of all our troubles, is none but God' (St Augustine).

PSALM 87

Contemplation of Christ Suffering and Praying
A Prayer in the Depths of Distress

1 (*Psalm of a song for the sons of Korah. For Mahalath to sing responsively. Of Contemplation. By Heman the Israelite*)
2 O Lord, God of my salvation,
I cry day and night before Thee.
3 O let my prayer enter Thy presence,
incline Thine ear to my petition.
4 For my soul is full of trouble;
and my life has drawn near to hell.
5 I am counted with those who go down to the pit;
I have become as a man without help, free among the dead,
6 like those who are wounded and lie in the grave,
whom Thou rememberest no more,
and they are cut off from Thy hand.
7 They laid me in the lowest pit,
in dark places and in the shadow of death.
8 Thy wrath presses upon me,[1]
and all Thy waves Thou hast brought upon me. (*Pause*)
9 Thou hast put away my acquaintances far from me,
and made me an abomination to them.
I am imprisoned and cannot escape.
10 My eyes fail from poverty,
Lord, I cry all day to Thee,
I stretch out my hands to Thee.
11 Wilt Thou work wonders among the dead,
or will physicians rise up and praise Thee?
12 Will anyone in the grave tell of Thy mercy
or Thy truth in the place of destruction?
13 Can Thy wonders be known in the dark,
and Thy justice in the land of oblivion?
14 But to Thee do I cry, O Lord;
and early shall my prayer come before Thee.
15 Lord, why dost Thou reject my soul,
and turn Thy face from me?

[1] 'The Lord suffered, not for His own sake, but for ours .... He suffered *for us*, and bore in Himself the wrath that was the penalty of our sin' (St. Athanasius).

16 I am poor and in trouble from my youth;
but after being exalted, I am humbled and perplexed.
17 Thy wrath has swept over me,
and Thy threats alarm me.
18 They surround me like water all day long,
they overwhelm me together.
19 Thou hast put far from me friend and neighbor
and my acquaintances because of my misery.

Glory....

PSALM 88

The Glorious Promises of God: The Eternal Covenant
The Eternal Reign Planned for the Son[1]

1 (*Of contemplation. By Ethan the Israelite*)
2 I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, for ever;
I will proclaim Thy truth with my mouth to all ages.
3 For Thou hast said: 'Mercy shall be built up for ever.'[2]
Thy truth is ready in the heavens.
4 I have made a covenant with My chosen people,
I have sworn to My servant David:
5 'I will prepare your Son[3] for an eternal reign,
and build up your throne for all generations.' (*Pause*)
6 The heavens praise Thy wonders, O Lord,
and Thy truth in the Church of the Saints.
7 For who in the clouds can equal the Lord?
And who is like the Lord among the sons of God?
8 God is glorious in the council of the saints,
great and terrible above all those around Him.
9 O Lord, God of Hosts, who is like Thee?
Thou art powerful, O Lord, and Thy truth is around Thee.
10 Thou rulest the raging of the sea,
Thou stillest the surge of its waves.
11 Thou humblest the proud like wounded men;
with Thy powerful arm Thou dost scatter Thy enemies.
12 Thine are the heavens and Thine the earth;
the world and its fullness Thou hast founded.

[1] 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard .... what God has planned for His lovers' (1 Cor. 2 : 9).
[2] 'God's mercy is the salvation and grace granted by Christ' (St. Athanasius).
[3] Son: *lit.* 'seed'. God will prepare the son of David to be the Messiah King.

13 The north and the sea Thou hast created;[1]
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Thy name.
14 Thine is a mighty arm;
let Thy hand be strong, Thy right hand uplifted.
15 Justice and judgment prepare the way for Thy throne;
mercy and truth pave the way for Thy presence.
16 Blessed are the people who know the festal shout.
They walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy presence.
17 They exult in Thy name all day long,
and in Thy righteousness they are exalted.
18 For Thou art the glory of their strength;
and by pleasing Thee we are raised to power.
19 For our protection belongs to the Lord,
and to our King, the Holy One of Israel.
20 Once Thou didst speak in a vision to Thy children[2]
and say: 'I have laid help upon a warrior;
I have exalted one chosen from My people.
21 I have found David, My servant;
with My holy oil I have anointed him.
22 For My hand will support him,
and My arm will strengthen him.
23 The enemy will not get the better of him,
and the son of iniquity will do him no harm.
24 And I will cut down his enemies before his face,
and rout those who hate him.
25 My truth and My mercy shall be with him,
and in My name he will rise to power.
26 I will extend his power over the sea,
and his right hand over the rivers.
27 He will call on Me: 'Thou art my Father,
my God, and the support of my salvation.'
28 And I will make him My firstborn,[3]
high above the kings of the earth.
29 I will cherish My love for him for ever,
and My covenant will stand firm with him.

[1] 'This means the four parts of the globe: North means the land of the midnight sun; sea means the West' (St. Athanasius). On the West of Palestine lies the Mediterrranean sea, so the Bible calls the West the Sea.

[2] Cp. 2 Samuel 7 : 4-17 ; 1 Chron. 17 : 3-14.

[3] *Firstborn*=Christ in David. Cp. Heb. 1 : 6 ; Rom. 8 : 29 ; Col. 1 : 13-18 ; Rev. 1 : 5 ; 3 : 14 ; Matt. 1 : 25 ; Exod. 4 : 22 ; Heb. 12 : 23.

30 And I will make his dynasty[1] eternal,
and his throne as the days of heaven.
31 If his sons forsake My law
and do not walk by My judgments,
32 if they profane My rights
and do not keep My commandments,
33 I will visit their sins with the rod,
and their iniquities with the scourge.
34 Yet I will not withdraw My mercy from them,
and will never break My troth.[2]
35 I will never profane My covenant,
nor ignore what has gone from My lips.
36 Once for all I have sworn by My holiness;
can I lie to David?
37 His dynasty[3] will continue for ever,
and his throne as long as the sun before Me,
38 like the moon that is fixed for ever,
like the faithful witness in heaven.'[4] (*Pause*)
39 But Thou hast rejected and spurned us;
Thou hast delayed Thy Christ.
40 Thou hast dissolved the covenant with Thy servant,
and profaned his sanctuary to the ground.
41 Thou hast broken down all his defences,
and put cowardice in his strongholds.
42 All who pass by plunder him;
he has become the scorn of his neighbors.
43 Thou hast raised up the right hand of his oppressors;
Thou hast gladdened all his enemies.
44 Thou hast foiled the help of his sword,
and hast not supported him in battle.
45 Thou hast made an end of his purification;
Thou hast dashed his throne to the ground.
46 Thou hast shortened the days of his life;
Thou hast covered him with shame. (*Pause*)
47 How long, O Lord, wilt Thou turn away?
Will Thy wrath burn like fire for ever?

[1] dynasty: *lit.* seed (Gal. 3 : 16 ; Is. 9 : 7).
[2] In Hebrew thought, truth, troth and fidelity are inseparable concepts. To be true is to be faithful. True life is the relationship of obedient and mutual love (Jn. 14 : 15 ; 15 : 10 ; Mk. 3 : 35).
[3] dynasty: *lit.* seed.
[4] Rev. 1: 5 ; 3 : 14.

48 Remember what my substance is.
Hast Thou created in vain all the children of men?
49 What man can live and not see death?
Who can deliver his soul from the clutch of hell? (*Pause*)
50 Where are Thy mercies of old, O Lord,
which Thou didst solemnly promise to David by Thy truth?
51 Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Thy servants,
how I bear in my bosom the reproach of many nations,
52 with which Thy enemies reproach us, O Lord,
with which they reproach the redemption of Thy Christ.
53 Blessed be the Lord for ever. So be it! So be it!

Glory . . . .

PSALM 89

God our Home and Refuge: Prayer for Guidance and Radiance

Dying Creatures, Dying Comforts

1 (*A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God*)
Lord, Thou hast been our refuge
from generation to generation.
2 Before the mountains came to birth
or the earth and the world was formed,
from age to age eternally Thou art.
3 Do not turn men away to humiliation.
And Thou hast said: 'Return, sons of men.'
4 For a thousand years in Thy sight are like a single day,
like yesterday which has come and gone,
like a watch in the night.
5 Trifling will their years be.
In the morning like grass they may pass away.
6 In the morning it flowers, then fades away;
by evening it droops, grows hard and withers.
7 For we are dying in Thy wrath,[1]
and we are dismayed by Thy anger.
8 Thou hast set our sins before Thee,
our lives in the light of Thy presence.

[1] From Egypt to the Promised Land was only a matter of days (Dt. 1:2), yet Israel wandered for 40 years and most of them died in the wilderness without entering it. So we today wander in the wilderness of unbelief and disobedience without entering by faith and love into the rest and resources of the Kingdom (Heb. 4; Num. 14:26-35).

9 For all our days are passing,
and we are dying in Thy wrath.
Our years may be considered a cobweb.
10 The span of our lives is seventy years,
and if in the strong it is eighty years,
yet most of it is labor and sorrow,
for weakness comes over us
and we are subdued.
11 Who knows the power of Thy anger,
and who can guage Thy wrath by Thy fear?
12 So make Thy right hand known to me,
and those disciplined in heart by wisdom.[1]
13 Return, O Lord; how long?
And be gracious to Thy servants.
14 Let us be satisfied with Thy mercy in the morning,
and we shall rejoice and be glad all our days.
15 Gladden us for the days in which Thou hast humbled us,
for the years in which we have seen evils.
16 And look upon Thy servants and Thy works,
and guide their children.
17 And may the radiance of the Lord our God be upon us,
and direct the works of our hands for us,
and direct the work of our hands.

PSALM 90

God a Mother Bird

A Colloquy: Security of the Divine Protection

1 *(The Praise of a Song. By David)*
He who dwells in the help[2] of the Most High,
will live in the protection of the God of Heaven.
2 He will say to the Lord,
'Thou art my Protector and my Refuge—
my God,' and in Him will I trust.
3 For He will deliver you from the snare of the hunters,
and from the embarrassing word.
4 He will overshadow you with His shoulders,
and under His wings you shall trust;
His truth will surround you with armour.

[1] Make known to me Christ the Wisdom and Power of God (1 Cor. 1 : 24), and make known to me Thy Saints whose hearts are disciplined by Him (cp. St. Athanasius).
[2] That is, in the Kingdom (1 Cor. 4 : 20).

5 You will not be afraid of any terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
6 of a thing that prowls in the dark,
of accident, or the noonday devil.
7 A thousand may fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand;
but it will not come near you.
8 Only with your eyes you will behold
and see the reward of sinners.
9 For Thou, O Lord, art my hope;
Thou hast made the Most High Thy Refuge.
10 No evil will come to you,
and no scourge will come near your dwelling.
11 For He will give His Angels charge over you,
to guard you in all your ways.
12 They will bear you in their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.[1]
13 You will tread upon the asp and the basilisk;
the lion and the dragon[2] you will trample underfoot.
14 Because he has trusted in Me, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he has known My name.
15 He will call upon Me, and I will answer him.
I am with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and glorify him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him,
and show him My salvation.

Glory . . .

KATHISMA 13

PSALM 91

Praise and Thanksgiving of a Good and Happy Man
Singing Creation prompts a Singing Heart

1 (*Psalm of a song for the day of the Sabbath*)
2 It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High,
3 to tell of Thy mercy in the morning,
and of Thy truth in the night.

[1] Verses 11 and 12 were quoted by satan to tempt Christ (Matt. 4:6 ; Lk. 4 : 10).
[2] dragon: *or* serpent.

4 on a psaltery of ten strings,
with a song on the harp.
5 For Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by Thy creations,
and at the work of Thy hands I sing for joy.
6 How great are Thy works, O Lord!
How very deep are Thy designs!
7 A senseless man cannot know,
and a fool cannot understand this, that
8 when sinners spring up like grass
all the evildoers show their faces,
that they may be destroyed eternally.
9 But Thou art supreme for ever, O Lord.
10 For, lo, Thy enemies, O Lord,
lo, Thy enemies shall perish;
and all evildoers will be scattered.
11 But Thou givest me the strength of a rhinoceros,
and finest oil to refresh my old age.
12 And my eye looks down on my enemies,
and my ear hears the doom of my malicious assailants.
13 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
and will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
14 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord[1]
will flourish in the courts of our God.
15 They will still bear fruit in a ripe old age,
and will rejoice to declare
16 that the Lord our God is just,
and that there is no injustice in Him.

PSALM 92

Rivers of Living Water[2]

Praise of God Reigning in the Beauty of Holiness

1 *(For the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was peopled. The Praise of a Song by David)*

The Lord is reigning, He is robed in beauty.
The Lord is robed and girt with power.
He has made the world firm and it cannot be shaken.
2 Thy throne is prepared from of old,
Thou art from all eternity.

[1] House—Home, Family, Church, Kingdom: where God's will is done (1 Tim. 3 : 15 ; Heb. 3 : 2-6 ; Lk. 2 : 49 ; Mt. 6 : 10).
[2] John 7 : 38.

3 The rivers rise, O Lord,
the rivers raise their voice,
the rivers lift their waves.
4 Beyond the roar of many waters
and the wondrous ocean breakers,
more wondrous is the Lord on high.
5 Thy testimonies can be fully trusted.
Holiness becomes Thy house, O Lord, forever.

PSALM 93

God the Just Judge: His Judgments are His Appearances
The Blessing of God's Correction and Training

1 (*A Psalm by David for the fourth day of the week*)
The Lord is a God of justice;[1]
the God of justice has appeared.
2 Arise, O Judge of the earth!
Give the proud their deserts.
3 How long, O Lord, will sinners,
how long will sinners boast?
4 How long will they bluff and talk injustice?
How long will all the evildoers talk?
5 They crush Thy people, O Lord,
and oppress Thy inheritance.
6 They kill the widow and the orphan,
and murder the stranger.
7 And they say, 'The Lord does not see;
the God of Jacob does not understand.'
8 Understand, you most foolish of people;
and think, you dolts, for once.
9 He Who planted the ear, does He not hear?
Or He Who formed the eye, does He not see?
10 He Who trains the nations, does He not rebuke?
He Who teaches man, does He have no knowledge?
11 The Lord knows the thoughts of men,
He knows that they are foolish.[2]
12 Blessed is the man whom Thou trainest, O Lord,
and teachest out of Thy law.

[1] justice: *or* vengeance. Vengeance left to God culminates in Christ's Passion. Cp. Deut. 32 : 35 ; Heb. 10 : 30 ; Rom. 3 : 5 ; 12 : 19.
[2] Cp. 1 Cor. 3 : 20, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise. . . .'

13 to make him meek in evil days,
until the pit is dug for the sinner.
14 For the Lord will not reject His people
or abandon His inheritance
15 until His justice returns in judgment
and all the upright in heart abide by it. (*Pause*)
16 Who will stand up for me against the wicked?
Who will stand by me against the evildoers?
17 Unless the Lord had helped me,
my soul would soon have been in hell.
18 If I say, 'My foot is slipping,'
Thy mercy, O Lord, assists me.
19 Amid the thronging sorrows of my heart
Thy consolations enrapture my soul.
20 Can godless rulers have Thy help,
who make trouble in the name of law,
21 who hunt for the souls of honest men
and condemn innocent men to death?
22 But the Lord is my refuge,
and my God is the helper I trust.
23 And the Lord will repay them for their iniquity;
and by their own wickedness
the Lord God will destroy them.

Glory . . .

PSALM 94

Call to Praise the Great Saviour, God and King Jesus
True Worship is Obedience : My Sheep obey My Voice

(*The Praise of a Song. By David.*)

1 O come, let us sing with joy to the Lord;
let us shout for joy to God our Saviour.
2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
and shout for joy to Him with psalms.
3 For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King over all the earth.
4 In His hand are all the ends of the earth,
and the mountain peaks are His.
5 The sea is His, and He made it;
and His hands formed the dry land.
6 O come, let us worship and fall down before Him;
and let us weep before the Lord our Maker.

7 For He is our God,
and we are the people of His pasture
and the sheep of His hand.
8 Today if you hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation
on the day of trial in the wilderness,[1]
9 where your fathers tried Me,
challenged Me, and saw My works.
10 For forty years I was grieved with that generation,
and said: 'Their minds are always wandering,
and they never learn My ways.'[2]
11 So I swore in My wrath:
'They shall never enter My rest.'[3]

PSALM 95

Call to Praise God the Reigning King and Coming Judge
Sing to the Lord a New Song

1 (*When the House was built after the Captivity. A Song by David*)
Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord all the earth.
2 Sing to the Lord, bless His name;
tell the glad tidings of His salvation from day to day.
3 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.
4 For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the nations are demons;[4]
but the Lord made the heavens.
6 Praise and beauty attend Him;
holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary.
7 Bring to the Lord, O families of nations,
bring to the Lord glory and honour.
8 Bring to the Lord glory to His name;
bring sacrifices and come into His courts.
9 Worship the Lord in His holy court;
let all the earth tremble at His presence.

[1] Ex. 17 : 1-7.
[2] Num. 14 : 32-34.
[3] Cp. Heb. 3 : 7-11 ; 4 : 10.
[4] Cp. Deut. 32 : 17 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 20 ; Psalm 105 : 36-38 ; 1 Chron. 16 : 26.

10 Say among the nations: 'The Lord is reigning.'
He has set the world right and it cannot be shaken.
He will judge the peoples with justice.
11 Let the heavens be glad and let the earth exult,
let the sea rock and roll and all that is in it.[1]
12 The fields and all that is in them will rejoice;
then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
13 at the presence of the Lord. For He is coming,
He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice,
and the peoples by His truth.

PSALM 96

Earth Rejoices and Trembles at the Reign of God
All the Peoples Behold His Glory

1 (*By David, when his land was at rest*)
The Lord is reigning, let the earth rejoice;
let the many islands be glad.
2 Clouds and darkness are round about Him;
justice and judgment are the basis of His throne.
3 Fire goes before Him
and burns His enemies on every side.
4 His lightnings illumine the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
5 The mountains melt like wax at the Lord's presence,
at the presence of the Lord of all the earth.
6 The heavens declare His justice,
and all the peoples behold His glory.[2]
7 Let all who worship carved images
and boast of their idols be ashamed.
Worship Him, all you Angels of His.
8 Zion heard and was glad,
and the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
because of Thy judgments, O Lord.
9 For Thou art the Lord Most High over all the earth;
Thou art exalted far above all gods.

[1] i.e. Let the sea dance and roar in thunderous applause as the King of Glory appears. (This line is identical with 97 : 7a).
[2] Cp. Pss. 32 : 5b ; 84 : 10b. Rom. 1 : 19-21 ; 2 Cor. 4 : 6 ; Jn. 1 : 14 ; 6 : 40 ; 17 : 22-24.

10 You who love the Lord, hate evil;
the Lord guards the lives of His saints;
He delivers them from the clutch of sinners.
11 Light has dawned for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous,
and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 97

The New Song of Redemption and Judgment
All the Earth has seen God's Salvation

1 *(A Psalm by David)*
O sing to the Lord a new song,
for the Lord has done wonders;
His own right hand and His holy arm
have saved Him.[1]
2 The Lord has made known His salvation;
He has revealed His righteousness
in the sight of the nations.
3 He has remembered His mercy to Jacob,
and His truth to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
4 Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
sing and exult and chant psalms.
5 Sing praises to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and the tune of a psalm.
6 With metal trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout for joy before the Lord our King.
7 Let the sea rock and roll and all that is in it,
the world and all who dwell in it.
8 Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing for joy.
9 For He is coming to judge the earth;
He will judge the world with justice
and the peoples with equity.

[1] Christ was saved from corruption and rose from the dead by His own power and holiness. *Variant reading*: 'have saved (men) for Him.'

PSALM 98

Praise of God's Sovereign Supremacy and Holiness
A Forgiving God Enthroned on Cherubim

1 (*A Psalm By David*)
The Lord is reigning, let the peoples rage;
He is enthroned on the cherubim[1], let the earth quake.
2 Great is the Lord in Zion,
and supreme over all the peoples.
3 Let them thank and praise Thy great name,
for it is terrible and holy.
4 The King's honour loves justice;
Thou hast provided laws;
judgment and justice Thou hast wrought in Jacob.
5 Exalt the Lord our God
and fall down before His footstool,
for He is holy.
6 Moses and Aaron among His priests
and Samuel among those who call on His name,
they called on the Lord, and He heard them.
7 He spoke to them in a pillar of cloud,
for they kept His testimonies
and the orders He gave them.
8 O Lord our God, Thou didst answer them;
a forgiving God Thou wast to them,
though correcting all their practices.
9 Exalt the Lord our God
and worship at His holy mountain,
for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM 99

Praise God for His Goodness: Serve the Lord with Gladness
Enter with Exultation and Song, Praise and Thanksgiving

1 (*A Psalm for a Thank-offering*)
Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
2 Serve the Lord with gladness;
enter His presence with exultation.
3 Know that the Lord Himself is our God;
it is He who made us, and not we ourselves;
we are His people and sheep of His pasture.

[1] Rev. 4 : 6 ; Ezek. 1 : 5-10.

4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving
and His courts with songs;
give thanks to Him and praise His name.

5 For the Lord is good, His mercy is eternal;
and His truth continues from generation to generation.

PSALM 100

A Mirror for Kings

I will Sing of Thy Love

1 (*A Psalm by David*)

I will sing to Thee of mercy and judgment, O Lord.

2 I will sing and consider the way of perfection.
O when wilt Thou come to me?
I have walked in my house
in the innocence of my heart.

3 I set no ill deed before my eyes;
I hate those who do wrong.

4 No crooked heart has joined me.
A villain who avoids me I refuse to know.

5 The man who in private slanders his neighbor,
him I drive away.
Men of proud looks and grasping hearts
have no place at my table.

6 My eyes look to the faithful of the land,
that they may dwell with me.
He who lives a blameless life shall minister to me.

7 He who acts proudly shall not live in my house;
he who speaks falsehood
shall not prosper in my sight.

8 Each morning I slay all the sinners of the land,[1]
that I may purge all wrongdoers
from the city of the Lord.

Glory . . . .

[1] Daily I pray for the lost. Sinners are slain by conversion into believers, saints, friends and lovers.

KATHISMA 14

PSALM 101

The Lord will Appear in His Glory to Declare the Divine Name Israel's Renewal and the Gathering of the Nations

1 *(A Prayer for a poor man when he is despondent and pours out his petitions before the Lord)*

2 O Lord, hear my prayer,
and let my cry come to Thee.

3 Turn not Thy face from me
in the day when I am in trouble;
incline Thine ear to me.
Answer me speedily in the day when I call.

4 For my days vanish like smoke,
and my bones burn like brushwood.

5 My heart is sick and dry as grass,
so that I forget to eat my bread.

6 Because of my loud groaning
my bones stick to my flesh.

7 I have become like a pelican of the desert;
I am like a screech-owl in a ruined building.

8 I keep vigil, and am become
like a solitary bird on the housetop.

9 All day long my enemies taunt me,
and those who praise me swear against me.[1]

10 For I have eaten ashes like bread
and mingled my drink with weeping,

11 because of Thy wrath and Thy fury;
for Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down.

12 My days decline like a shadow,[2]
and I am withered like grass.

13 But Thou, O Lord, dost endure for ever,
and Thy remembrance throughout all generations.

14 Thou wilt rise and have mercy on Zion;
for it is time to have mercy on her,
because the time has come.

[1] Peter praised and confessed Christ, yet later he swore he did not know Him (Mt. 26 : 74 ; Mk. 14 : 71). [2] Cp. Ps. 38 : 7a.

15 For Thy servants delight in her stones
and have pity on her dust.[1]

16 The nations will fear Thy Name, O Lord,
and all the kings of the earth Thy glory.

17 For the Lord will build up Zion
and will appear in His glory.

18 He will regard the prayer of the humble,
and will not ignore their need.

19 Let this be written for another generation,
so a people to be created may praise the Lord.

20 He stooped from His holy height;
the Lord looked from heaven at the earth

21 to hear the groaning of the prisoners
and release the children of those put to death,

22 to declare the Name of the Lord in Zion
and His praise in Jerusalem,

23 to gather together the peoples
and their kings to serve the Lord.

24 He asked Him at the height of his strength:
Tell me how short my life is to be.

25 Do not take me away in the midst of my days.
Thy years are throughout all generations.

26 In the beginning, O Lord, Thou didst found the earth,
and the heavens are the work of Thy hands.

27 They will perish, but Thou remainest;
they will all wear out like a garment,
and Thou wilt change them like clothing
and they will be changed.

28 But Thou art ever the same,
and Thy years never end.

29 The children of Thy servants will dwell securely,
and their descendants[2] will be guided for ever.

[1] Though Zion is in ruins, to her servants every stone and even her dust is precious. '*Stones* are believers in Christ (1 Pet. 2:5; Zac. 9:16), *servants* are apostles, *dust* is earthlings, unbelievers' (St. Athanasius). Cp. Ps. 102:14.

[2] descendants: *lit.* seed. Verses 26-28 are quoted at Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8.

PSALM 102

Praise of God's Compassionate Love and Mercy[1]
He Forgives all Sin and Heals all Disease

1 *(By David)*
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me bless His holy name.
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits:
3 Who forgives all your sins,
Who heals all your diseases,
4 Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with mercy and compassion,
5 Who satisfies your desire with good things;
your youth will be renewed like an eagle's.
6 The Lord offers mercy and judgment
to all who are wronged.
7 He made known His ways to Moses,
His will to the children of Israel.[2]
8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
long-suffering and of great mercy.
9 He will not always be angry,
nor will He threaten for ever.
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
11 For as heaven is high above the earth,
so great is the Lord's mercy to those who fear Him.
12 As far as the East is from the West,
so far has He set our sins from us.[3]
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.
14 For He knows our mould,
He remembers that we are dust.
15 The days of man are as grass;
he flourishes as a flower of the field.
16 Once the spirit in him has passed, he will not exist;
and he will know his place no more.
17 But the Lord's mercy is eternal,
and continues for ever towards those who fear him.

[1] 'God is love' (1 John 4 : 8, 16).
[2] Cp. Ps. 147 : 8.
[3] East and West intersecting heaven and earth forms the Cross to which our sins were nailed (Col. 1 : 20 ; 2 : 14).

18 And His justice is upon their children's children,
for those who keep His covenant
and remember His commandments and do them.
19 The Lord has prepared His throne in heaven,
and His kingdom embraces all.[1]
20 Bless the Lord, all angels of His,
who are mighty in strength, who do His word
and listen to the voice of His orders.
21 Bless the Lord, all His Hosts,
His ministers who do His will.
22 Bless the Lord, all His works,
in every place of His dominion.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 103

The Wonders of Creation and God's Constant Care
All Look to Thee

1 (*By David*)
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, Thou art very great.
Thou art clothed with praise and splendor,
2 wrapping Thyself in light for a garment,
stretching out the sky like a skin:[2]
3 Who covers His upper regions with waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the winds,
4 Who makes spirits His Angels,
and His servants flames of fire,[3]
5 Who poises the earth on its axis;
it will never wander throughout all ages.
6 The deep like a garment is its clothing;
on the mountains waters stand.
7 At Thy rebuke they flee,
at the peal of Thy thunder they quail.
8 They spring from mountains and flow down valleys
to the place which Thou hast appointed for them.

[1] embraces all: *or*, 'rules over all.'
[2] He Whose hands stretch out the sky like a skin now stretches out His healing hands on the cross to draw all to Himself (cp. Is. 45 : 12 ; 65 : 2 ; Rom. 10 : 21 ; Jn. 12 : 32 ; 21 : 18 ; Acts 4 : 30 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 24).
[3] Heb. 1 : 7 ; Ezek. 1 : 14 ; 2 Esdras 8 : 22.

9 Thou hast set a bound they cannot pass,
so they can never return to cover the earth.
10 He sends torrents down ravines;
the waters pass between the mountains.
11 They give drink to all the beasts of the field;
therein wild asses slake their thirst.
12 The birds of heaven settle on them;
among the rocks they pipe their calls.
13 Thou waterest mountains from above,
the earth is filled with the fruit of Thy works.
14 He makes grass spring up for the cattle
and plants through the labor of men
to produce bread from the earth:
15 that wine may cheer the heart of man,
that his face may shine with oil,
and bread sustain man's heart.
16 The trees of the plain are drenched,
the cedars of Lebanon which He planted.
17 There the birds make their nests,
the heronry at their head.
18 The high mountains are for the deer,
a rock is a refuge for badgers.
19 He has made the moon for seasons;
the sun knows his setting time.
20 Thou decreest darkness and night falls,
in which all the beasts of the forest prowl:
21 young lions roaring for their prey
and seeking their food from God.
22 The sun rises and they gather together,
and lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to his work
and to his labor until the evening.
24 How magnificent are Thy works, O Lord!
Thou hast made all things in wisdom.
The earth is full of Thy creatures.
25 There is the sea, great and wide;
there live reptiles without number,
creatures small and great.

26 There ships sail to and fro;
there too is that serpent
which Thou hast made to sport in it.
27 All look to Thee
to give them their food in due season.
28 When Thou givest it them, they gather it;
when Thou openest Thy hand,
all things are filled with goodness.
29 When Thou turnest away Thy face they are troubled.
Thou takest away their spirit and they vanish,
and return to their dust.
30 Thou sendest out Thy spirit, and they are created;
and Thou renewest the face of the earth.
31 May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
the Lord delights in His works.
32 He looks upon the earth and makes it tremble;
He touches the mountains and they smoke.
33 I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
34 May my meditation please Him,
and I will delight in the Lord.
35 May sinners vanish from the earth,
and the lawless so as to be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 104[1]

The History of Israel: Saved to Serve and Obey
He never Forgets His Eternal Covenant

1 (*Alleluia*)
O give thanks to the Lord and call on His name;
tell of His doings among the nations.
2 Sing to Him and praise Him;
recount all His wonders.
3 Glory in His holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
4 Seek the Lord and be strengthened;
seek continually His presence.

[1] Much of Psalm 104 occurs almost verbatim in 1 Chron. 16 : 8-22 (cp. vv. 7 : 36).

5 Remember the wonders He has done,
His portents and the judgments of His mouth,
6 you children of Abraham, His servants,
you sons of Jacob, His chosen people.
7 He is the Lord our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.
8 He never forgets His covenant,
the promise He made for a thousand generations,
9 the covenant which He made with Abraham,
and the oath which He swore to Isaac,
10 which He confirmed to Jacob as a law,
and to Israel as an eternal covenant,
11 saying, ' To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion of your inheritance,'
12 when they were few in number,
very few and foreigners in it.
13 And they passed from nation to nation,
and from one kingdom to another people.
14 He allowed no one to injure them,
and reproved kings on their account:
15 ' Touch not My anointed people,[1]
and do My prophets no harm.'
16 And He called a famine on the land—
broke all the support of bread.
17 He sent a man ahead of them;
Joseph was sold as a slave.
18 They humbled his feet with fetters;
his life was spent in hard labour.
19 Till what He had said came to pass,
the word of the Lord tested him.
20 The king sent and released him;
the ruler of the people set him free.
21 He made him lord of all his house
and ruler of all his possessions,
22 to train his princes to be like himself
and to teach his senators wisdom.
23 Then Israel came into Egypt.
and Jacob settled in the land of Ham.

[1] 'You have an anointing from the Holy One' (1 Jn. 2 : 20 ; Ex. 19 : 6 ; Is. 61 : 6 ; Rev. 1 : 6 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 5-9). *Lit.* 'Touch not My Christs.'

24 And He increased His people exceedingly,
and made them stronger than their enemies.
25 He turned their hearts to hate His people,
to deal craftily with His servants.
26 He sent His servant Moses,
and Aaron whom He had chosen for Himself.
27 To them He committed the words of His signs
and of His portents in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness and made it dark,
for they had provoked His words.
29 He turned their waters into blood
and killed their fish.
30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in their royal apartments.
31 He spoke and the mosquito came,
and gnats in all their country.
32 He gave them hail for rain,
and a flaming fire in their land.
33 And He struck their vines and their fig-trees,
and broke every tree of their land.
34 He spoke and the locust came,
and caterpillars[1] past all counting.
35 And they devoured everything green in their land,
and consumed the fruit of their ground.
36 Then He struck all the first-born of their land,
the first-fruits of all their labour.
37 And He brought them out with silver and gold,
and there was not a sick person among their tribes.
38 Egypt was glad at their departure,
for a fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 He spread a cloud for their protection.
and fire to illumine the night for them.
40 They asked, and flocks of quail came,
and He filled them with the bread of heaven.[2]
41 He split a rock and waters gushed out;
rivers ran in the desert.
42 For He remembered His holy promise
made to Abraham His servant.[3]

[1] caterpillars: larva of the locust. [2] Ex. 16 : 12-15; Jn. 6 : 31-35.
[3] Gen. 15 : 14.

43 And He brought out His people with joy
and His chosen ones with gladness.
44 And He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they inherited the peoples' labours,
45 that they might observe His rights,
and search out His law.[1]

Glory . . .

KATHISMA 15

PSALM 105

Historical Retrospect: Confession of Sin and Ingratitude
They Forgot God Who roused Compassion for Them

1 *(Alleluia)*
Give thanks to the Lord, He is good;
His mercy[2] is eternal.
2 Who can tell of the mighty powers of the Lord,
or make all His praises heard?
3 Blessed are they who act justly
and do what is right at all times.
4 Remember us, O Lord, in Thy love for Thy people;
visit us with Thy salvation,
5 that we may see it in the goodness of Thy chosen ones,
that we may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation,
that we may sing praises with Thy inheritance.
6 We have sinned with our fathers,
we have done evil, we have done wrong.
7 Our fathers failed in Egypt to understand Thy wonders,[3]
and they did not remember Thy great mercy,
and they provoked Thee when going up at the Red Sea.
8 Yet He saved them for His name's sake
to make known His mighty power.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up;
and He led them in its depths as in the desert.
10 And He saved them from the clutch of their hateful foe
and redeemed them from the hands of their enemies.

[1] Law (Torah) meant scripture. 'Torah planted in our midst eternal life' says the Jewish Prayer Book. Study of the Law was the centre of Jewish life (cp. Jn. 5 : 39).
[2] mercy : *or* love. [3] Cp. Mark 8 : 17-21 ; Matthew 16 : 9-12.

11 Water covered their oppressors;
not one of them was left.
12 Then they believed His words
and sang His praise.
13 They soon forgot His works;
they would not wait for His will.
14 They indulged their desire in the wilderness,
and tempted God in the desert.
15 And He gave them their request,
and sent surfeit into their souls.[1]
16 They angered Moses in the camp,
and Aaron the priest of the Lord.
17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan[2]
and buried Abiram's crew.
18 And fire broke out in their company;
the flames burned up the sinners.
19 They made a calf at Horeb
and worshipped the carved idol.
20 They exchanged the glory of God
for the image of a bull that eats grass.
21 They forgot God their Saviour,
Who had done great things in Egypt;
22 wonderful things in the land of Ham,
terrible things at the Red Sea.
23 And He said He would destroy them,
had not Moses His chosen servant
stood in the breach before Him
to prevent His wrath from destroying them.
24 Then they despised the promised land;
they did not believe His word.
25 And they murmured in their tents;
they did not obey the Lord's voice.
26 So He raised His hand against them
to lay them low in the wilderness,
27 to scatter their children among the nations[3]
and disperse them in foreign lands.
28 They were initiated to Baal-Phegor,
and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

[1] Num. 11 : 34. [2] Num. 16 : 32. [3] children: *lit.* seed.

29 And they provoked Him with their ways,
and the plague raged among them.
30 Then Phineas rose and made atonement,
and the outbreak was stopped.
31 And this has been counted to him for righteousness
from age to age eternally.
32 They angered Him too at the water of conflict,
and Moses suffered on their account.
33 For they provoked his spirit,
and he spoke rashly with his lips.
34 They did not destroy the nations,
as the Lord had told them;
35 but they mixed with the nations,
and learned their practices.
36 And they served their idols,
which became a snare to them.
37 They even sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to demons,
38 and shed innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.
And the land was polluted with blood
39 and defiled by their practices,
and they played the wanton by their ways.
40 Then the Lord raged with fury against His people
and abhorred His inheritance.
41 And He delivered them into the hands of their enemies,
and those who hated them ruled over them.
42 Their enemies oppressed them,
and they were humbled under their hands.
43 Many times He delivered them,
but they provoked Him by their wilfulness
and were humbled for their iniquities.
44 Yet the Lord saw when they were in trouble,
and He heard their prayer
45 and He remembered His covenant,
and in His great mercy He relented.
46 He even roused compassion for them
among all who took them captive.

47 Save us, O Lord our God,
and gather us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to Thy holy name
and triumph in Thy praise.
48 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
from age to age.
And let all the people say: Amen. Amen.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 106

Historical Retrospect: God's Infinite Love and Mercy in Saving Men. He sent His Word and Healed Them

1 (*Alleluia*)
Give thanks to the Lord, He is good;
His mercy is eternal.
2 Let those say so who have been redeemed by the Lord,
whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
3 whom He has gathered out of the lands,
from the east and the west and the north and the sea.
4 They wandered in the wilderness, in a waterless land;
they could find no way to a city to settle in.
5 Hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.
6 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and He delivered them from their distress.
7 And He guided them to the right way,
till they came to a city where they could settle.
8 Let them praise and thank the Lord for His mercies
and His wonders for the children of men.
9 For He satisfies the empty soul,
and fills the hungry with good things.
10 Those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death,
bound by poverty and iron,
11 because they rebelled against God's decrees,
and thwarted the will of the Most High,
12 when their heart was humbled by troubles,
when they were weak and there was no one to help them,
13 then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and He saved them from their distress.

14 And He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death
and snapped their chains.
15 Let them praise and thank the Lord for His mercies
and His wonders for the children of men.
16 For He shatters gates of bronze
and crumples iron bars.
17 He helped them out of the way of their sin,
for they were brought low through their iniquities.
18 Their soul loathed all food,
and they came near to death's door.
19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and He saved them from their distress.
20 He sent His word and healed them.
and delivered them from their disorders.[1]
21 Let them praise and thank the Lord for His mercies
and His wonders for the children of men.
22 And let them offer Him the sacrifice of praise,
and tell of His works with exultation.
23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,
who do trade in great waters—
24 they see the works of the Lord,
and His wonders in the deep.
25 He speaks and a storm wind rises,
which lifts the waves of the sea.
26 They mount to the sky and sink to the depths;
their soul melts at their evil plight.
27 They reel and stagger like drunken men,
and all their skill is scuttled.
28 Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble,
and He brings them out of their distress.
29 He commands the storm and lulls it to a breeze,
and its waves are stilled.
30 Then they are glad because they are quiet;
and He guides them to the haven of His will.
31 Let them praise and thank the Lord for His mercies
and His wonders for the children of men.

[1] 'Not even venomous serpents' teeth vanquished Thy sons, for Thy mercy came to their help and healed them. No herb or poultice cured them, but it was Thy Word, O Lord, that heals all men.' (Wisdom 16 : 10-12 ; Num. 21 : 6-9 ; Heb. 4 : 2).

32 Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people,
and praise Him at the session of elders.
33 He turns rivers into a wilderness,
and streams into thirsty ground.
34 He turns fruitful land into a salt marsh,
for the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
35 He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
and arid ground into streams.
36 And there He settles the hungry
and they build cities to dwell in.
37 And they sow fields and plant vineyards,
which yield a harvest of fruits.
38 And He blesses them and they multiply greatly,
and their herds do not diminish.
39 Then they dwindle and suffer hardship
from the stress of adversity and sorrow.
40 He pours contempt on their rulers,
and makes them wander in a trackless waste.
41 Again He helps the poor out of their poverty,
and makes their families like flocks of sheep.
42 Honest men see and are glad,
and the mouths of all sinners are silenced.
43 Whoever is wise will observe these things,
and will understand the mercies of the Lord.[1]

Glory . . . .

PSALM 107

Morning Prayer for Victory: God's Glory Over All the Earth
My Heart is Ready: I will rise Early

1 (*Songs of a Psalm by David*)
2 My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready;
I will sing and chant psalms with my glory.
3 Awake, psaltery and harp;
I will rise early.
4 I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to Thee among the nations.
5 For great is Thy mercy beyond the heavens,
and Thy truth reaches the clouds.

[1] 'mercies of the Lord': *or*, the Lord's love.

6 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
and Thy glory over all the earth.[1]
7 That Thy beloved may be delivered,
save with Thy right hand and answer me.
8 God has spoken in His sanctuary:
'I will be exalted and divide Shekem,
and parcel out the valley of tents.
9 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine,
and Ephraim is the support of My head;
Judah is My King.
10 Moab I hope to make My washbowl,
over Edom I will extend my sway,[2]
strangers will submitt to Me.'
11 Who will lead me to the fortified city?
Or who will guide me to Edom?
12 Wilt not Thou, O God, Who hast rejected us?
Wilt not Thou, O God, go out with our armies?
13 Grant us help from our trouble,
for vain is the salvation of man.
14 In God we shall win a mighty victory,
and He will bring to nothing our enemies.

PSALM 108

A Prediction of Christ's Rejection, Death and Resurrection
In Return for My Love they Accuse Me

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
O God, do not silently ignore my praise,
2 for the mouths of sinners
and the mouths of deceivers
are opened against me;
they speak against me with a lying tongue.
3 They surround me with words of hatred
and war against me without cause.
4 In return for my love they accuse me;
but I pray for them.
5 They repay me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

[1] The first 6 verses of this Psalm are almost identical with Psalm 56 : 8-12, and the rest only differ in 3 words from 59 : 7-14.
[2] See Psalm 59 : 10 and footnote.

6 Set a sinner over him,
and let the devil stand at his right hand.
7 When he is judged, let him go out condemned;
and let his prayer become a sin.
8 Let his days be few,
and let someone else take his commission.[1]
9 Let his children be orphans,
and his wife a widow.
10 Let his sons be displaced persons,
vagabonds and beggars;
let them be driven from hearth and home.
11 Let the creditor ransack all that he has,
and let strangers plunder his labours.
12 Let there be no one to help him,
nor anyone to pity his orphans.
13 Let his children be doomed to destruction;
in a single generation let his name be wiped out.
14 Let the sin of his fathers be remembered by the Lord,
and let his mother's guilt not be blotted out.
15 Let their sins be always before the Lord,
and let their memory perish from the earth.
16 For he never thought of showing mercy,
but persecuted the poor and needy man,
and hounded the brokenhearted to death.
17 He loved cursing, so that is what comes to him;
he cared nothing for blessing, so blessing eludes him.
18 He put on cursing like a cloak,
and it entered his body like water,[2]
and like oil it seeped into his bones.
19 Let it be like a cloak he wraps round him,
and like a belt which continually binds him.
20 This is what the Lord does to my accusers,
and to those who speak evil against my soul.
21 But Thou, O Lord God, deal with me for Thy name's sake,
for Thy mercy is gracious.
22 Deliver me, for I am poor and needy,
and my heart is troubled within me.

[1] *Or* episcopate, oversight, superintendence. Acts 1 : 20-25.
[2] Cp. Num. 5 : 22.

23 Like a shadow at sunset I glide away;
I am shaken out like locusts.
24 My knees are weak from fasting,
and my flesh is shrunken for want of oil.
25 I have become an object of scorn;
all who see me shake their heads.[1]
26 Help me, O Lord my God,
and save me in Thy mercy.
27 Let them know that this is Thy hand,
and that Thou, Lord, hast done it.
28 They may curse, but Thou wilt bless.
Let those who rise against me be put to shame,
but let Thy servant rejoice.
29 Let my accusers be clothed with confusion,
and let them be covered with shame for a cloak.
30 I will give great thanks to the Lord with my mouth,
and in the midst of crowds I will praise Him.
31 For He stands at the side of the poor and needy
to save my soul from my persecutors.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 16

PSALM 109

The Messiah King, Priest and Judge: His Triumphant Ascension Ruling in the midst of His Enemies

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand,[2]
till I put Thy enemies under Thy feet.'
2 The Lord will send Thee from Zion the sceptre of power:[3]
'Rule in the midst of Thy enemies.'

[1] Mt. 27 : 39.

[2] 'Can you wonder that David's Son is his Lord when you see that Mary was the Mother of her Lord? He is David's Lord as being God the Lord of all and David's Son as being the Son of Man. At once Lord and Son' (St. Augustine. Cp. Mt. 22 : 43-45).

[3] The power of the Gospel, the power of the Cross, which is the power of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost (St. Athanasius).

3 The dominion is Thine in the day of Thy power,
in the glories of Thy saints.[1]
From the womb before the dawn I begot Thee.[2]
4 The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind:
'Thou art a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek.'[3]
5 The Lord at Thy right hand
will crush kings in the day of His wrath.
6 He will judge among the nations,
He will fill the earth with corpses;
He will crush the heads of many on earth.
7 He will drink from the stream by the wayside;
therefore He will lift up His head.[4]

PSALM 110

Praise and Thanksgiving for the Great Works of God
He sent Redemption to His People

1 (*Alleluia*)
I will thank Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart
in the assembly of the upright
and in the congregation.
2 Great are the works of the Lord,
adapted to all His purposes.
3 His work is filled with glory and majesty,
and His righteousness endures for ever.
4 He has made a memorial of His wonders;[5]
merciful and compassionate is the Lord.
5 He gives food to those who fear Him;
He will ever be mindful of His covenant.[6]
6 He has shown His people the power of His works
by giving them possession of the nations.
7 The works of His hands are truth and justice;
all His commandments are sure.

[1] Cp. 1 Cor. 15 : 41-43.
[2] Before the dawn of creation, before time began, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. He never left His Father's bosom even as a man on earth (Jn. 1 : 18 ; 3 : 13).
[3] Heb. 7 : 21.
[4] 'Showing His active and frugal way of life, Christ spent most of His time in mountains and deserts, not only by day, but also by night' (St Chrysostom). Dt. 8 : 7. Stream: *lit.* torrent. Cp. Ps. 35 : 9.
[5] Ex. 12 : 14-27; 1 Cor. 11 : 23-30 ; Mt. 26 : 28. This Psalm names some of the wonders: the manna, redemption from Egypt, the law-giving, the gift of the promised land.
[6] Gen. 6 : 18 ; 9 : 9f ; 15 ; 17 ; Ex. 19 : 5 ; Mk. 14 : 24 ; Lk. 22 : 20, 29, 30.

8 They are fixed throughout the ages;
they are made in truth and justice.
9 He sent redemption to His people;
He has commanded His covenant for ever.
Holy and terrible is His name.
10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning[1] of wisdom,
and all who do this have a good understanding.[2]
His praise continues throughout the ages.

PSALM 111

The Good and Righteous Man is a Light in a dark World
He is not Afraid of Bad Tidings

1 (*Alleluia*)
Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who takes great delight in His commandments.
2 His sons will be powerful on earth;
the children of the upright are blessed.
3 Glory and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures for ever.
4 He shines as a light in the dark for the upright:
merciful, compassionate and just.
5 A good man shows compassion and lends;
he conducts his affairs with justice.
6 For he will never be shaken;
the righteous will live in eternal remembrance.
7 He is not afraid of bad tidings;
he heart is resolved to trust in the Lord.
8 His heart is firm, he will not be afraid,
till he sees the fall of his enemies.
9 He distributes freely, he gives to the poor;
his goodness continues for ever,
he is raised to power and glory.
10 The sinner sees and rages;
he grinds his teeth and pines away;
the desire of the sinner will perish.[3]

Glory . . . .

[1] *Or*: source, fount, spring, sum, essential principle (Prov. 1:7).
[2] To cultivate this fear is to practise living in the presence of God, which is the height of wisdom and understanding.
[3] 'The world is passing away, and the desire for it; but anyone who does the will of God lives for ever' (1 Jn. 2:17).

PSALM 112[1]

Adoration of the Supreme God of Glory and Compassion
He Watches over the Humble

1 (*Alleluia*)
Praise the Lord, you children!
Praise the name of the Lord.
2 Blessed be the name of the Lord
from this time forth and for evermore.
3 From sunrise to sunset
may the Lord's name be praised.
4 The Lord is supreme over all the nations;
His glory is beyond the heavens.
5 Who is like the Lord our God,
Who makes His home on high,
6 yet watches over the humble things
in heaven and on earth?
7 He raises the poor from the earth
and lifts the needy from the dunghill,
8 to seat him with princes,
with the rulers of His people.
9 He settles the barren woman in a home
as a happy mother with her children.

PSALM 113

The Exodus: Israel Becomes God's Sanctuary and Domain
The Earth shook at the Presence of God

1 (*Alleluia*)
When Israel came out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a barbarous people,
2 Judea became His sanctuary,[2]
Israel His domain.
3 The sea saw and took to flight;[3]
Jordan turned back at the sight.

[1] Psalms 112-117 form the *Hallel* sung in the Temple at Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Dedication, and the New Moons. At the domestic celebration of the Passover, 112-113 : 8 were sung before and 113 : 9-117 after the supper (cp. Mt. 26 : 30 ; Mk. 14 : 26).

[2] Ex. 19 : 6; 29 : 43-46; Deut. 27 : 9 ; Is. 63 : 18, 19 ; Jer. 2 : 3 ; 2 Cor. 6 : 16.

[3] Israel saw God save him (Gen. 32 : 30). The sea saw what Israel saw and shrank from the vision of God (Cp. Ex. 14 : 21 ; Josh. 3 : 13-16 ; Ps. 76 : 17). Israel was saved to serve both as sanctuary or house and as domain or kingdom, *Isra*=ruled, *El*=by God: Ruled-by-God (Gen. 32 : 28).

4 The mountains skipped like rams
and the little hills like lambs.
5 Why was it, O sea, that you fled,
and you, O Jordan, that you turned back?
6 Why did you mountains skip like rams
and you little hills like lambs?
7 The earth rocked[1] at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 Who converts rock into pools of water
and flint into fountains.

(*Psalm* 115 *in the Hebrew version*)

9 Not to us, O Lord, not to us,
but to Thy name give the glory,
10 for the sake of Thy mercy and truth,
lest the nations say, 'Where is their God?'
11 But our God is in heaven and on earth;
He does whatever He likes.[2]
12 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.
13 They have mouths yet cannot speak,
they have eyes yet cannot see,
14 they have ears yet cannot hear,
they have noses yet cannot smell,
15 they have hands yet cannot feel,
they have feet yet cannot walk,
nor can they make a sound with their throat.
16 Let those who make them be like them,
and all who trust in them.
17 The house of Israel trusts in the Lord;
He is their helper and protector.
18 The house of Aaron trusts in the Lord;
He is their helper and protector.
19 Those who fear the Lord trust in the Lord;
He is their helper and protector.
20 The Lord has remembered us and blessed us;
He has blessed the house of Israel,
He has blessed the house of Aaron.
21 He has blessed those who fear the Lord,
both small and great.

[1] Earth rocked and rolled in travail at the birth of a nation (cp. Jn. 16:20-22).
[2] Cp. John 1:18; 3:13; Wisdom 18:16.

22 May the Lord grant you increase,
you and your children.
23 May you be blessed by the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
24 The heaven of heaven belongs to the Lord,
but the earth He has given to the sons of men.
25 The dead do not praise Thee, O Lord,
nor all who go down to hell.[1]
26 But we who live will bless the Lord,
from now and to all eternity.

PSALM 114

Act of Love on Being Saved from Death
I will live to Please the Lord

1 (*Alleluia*)
I love Him[2] because the Lord hears
the cry of my prayer,
2 because He inclines His ear to me;
so all my days I will call upon Him.
3 The pangs of death beset me,
the trials of hell befell me;
I encountered trouble and grief.
4 Then I called on the name of the Lord:
'O Lord, deliver my soul.'
5 The Lord is merciful and just;
Our God is indeed merciful.
6 The Lord is the keeper of infants;
I was humbled and He saved me.
7 Return, O my soul, to your rest,[3]
for the Lord has dealt kindly with you.
8 For He has delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears and my feet from slipping.
9 I will live to please the Lord
in the land of the living.

Glory . . . .

[1] Gk. *hades*: the abode of the dead or departed (and so elsewhere).
[2] 'Who did he love? The Lord God with all his heart . . . . and as a reward for his love, he received the answers to his prayers' says St Athanasius the Great (cp. 1 John 4:19). Gk. *ēgapēsa* can also mean: I am overjoyed *or* delighted.
[3] cp. Heb. 4:10; Phil. 2:12; Mt. 11:28, 29; Jer. 6:16.

PSALM 115

Promise of Sacrificial Service in Gratitude to God
I will drink the Cup of Salvation

1 (*Alleluia*)
I believed and so I spoke;[1]
but I was deeply humiliated.
2 I said in my madness:
Everyman is a liar.
3 What shall I give in return to the Lord
for all that He has given me?
4 I will receive the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord.
5 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all His people.
6 Precious[2] in the sight of the Lord
is the death of His Saints.
7 O Lord, I am Thy slave;
I am Thy slave and the son of Thy handmaid.
Thou hast broken my bonds asunder.
8 I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of praise,
and I will pray in the name of the Lord.
9 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all His people,
10 in the courts of the Lord's house,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

PSALM 116

World-wide Call to Praise the Lord
Mercy and Truth Meet without Merging

1 (*Alleluia*)
All you nations, praise the Lord!
Praise Him, all you peoples![3]
2 For strong is His love for us,
and the Lord stays true to His word forever.

[1] 2 Cor. 4:13.
[2] *Or*: costly (Wisdom 1:13-16).
[3] Rom. 15:11.

PSALM 117

Processional Song of Praise for the Great Redemption
The Lord is my Strength and my Song

1 (*Alleluia*)
Give thanks to the Lord, He is good;
His mercy[1] is eternal.
2 Let the house of Israel say: He is good;
His mercy is eternal.
3 Let the house of Aaron say: He is good;
His mercy is eternal.
4 Let all who fear the Lord say: He is good;
His mercy is eternal.
5 Out of my trouble I called on the Lord,
and He answered me with enlargement.
6 The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear what man can do to me.[2]
7 The Lord is my helper,
and I shall see the fall of my enemies.
8 It is better to trust in the Lord
than to trust in man.
9 It is better to hope in the Lord
than to hope in princes.
10 All the nations surrounded me,
but by the name of the Lord I repulsed them.
11 They surrounded me in swarms,
but by the name of the Lord I repulsed them.
12 They surrounded me like bees round a honeycomb,
and blazed like fire in thorns;
but by the name of the Lord I repulsed them.
13 I was hard pressed and about to fall,
but the Lord supported me.
14 The Lord is my strength and my song,
and has become my salvation.
15 The voice of joy and health
is in the homes of the righteous.
The Lord's right hand wins a mighty victory.

[1] Mercy *or* love. [2] Heb. 13:6.

16 The Lord's right hand lifts me on high;
the Lord's right hand wins a mighty victory.[1]
17 I will not die, but live
and proclaim the works of the Lord.
18 The Lord has chastened me, chastened me indeed,
but He has not delivered me to death.
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter by them and give thanks to the Lord.
20 This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous enter by it.
21 I praise and thank Thee
that Thou hast answered me
and hast become my salvation.
22 The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner-stone.[2]
23 This is the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
24 This is the day which the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
25 O Lord, save us;
prosper us, O Lord.
26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;
we bless you from the house of the Lord.
27 The Lord is God and has appeared to us.
Bind the sacrifice[3] with ropes
to the horns of the altar.
28 Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee;
Thou art my God, and I will exalt Thee;
I praise and thank Thee
that Thou hast answered me
and hast become my salvation.
29 Give thanks to the Lord, He is good;
His mercy is eternal.

Glory . . . .

[1] *Or* exerts power *or* works a miracle *or* creates power. (Cp. Ps. 59 : 14)
[2] Mt. 21 : 42; Acts 4 : 11; 1 Pet. 2 : 7; Eph. 2 : 20; Is. 28 : 16; Zach. 4 : 7. Not a keystone of an arch, but a corner-stone uniting two walls and all walls.
[3] *Heorte*=festal victim or sacrifice. The 4 corners of the altar were shaped like horns (Ex. 27 : 2). Christ was bound to the horns of the altar of the cross by the cords of love (cp. Hos. 11 : 4; Jn. 10 : 18).

KATHISMA 17

PSALM 118

Love for the Law of Love
The Word Reveals the Heart and Mind of God

(Alleluia)

1 Blessed are they who are faultless in the way,[1]
who live by the law of the Lord.[2]
2 Blessed are they who search out His testimonies,[3]
who seek Him with their whole heart.[4]
3 For those whose work is sin
do not walk in His ways.
4 Thou hast ordered Thy commandments
to be strictly observed.
5 O that my ways were directed
to the observance of Thy rights!
6 Then I shall not be ashamed,
when I regard all Thy commandments.
7 I will praise and thank Thee with an upright heart,
as I learn the justice of Thy judgments.
8 I will observe Thy rights;
O forsake me not utterly.
9 How can a young man direct his way?
By obeying Thy words.
10 With my whole heart I seek Thee;
let me not be driven from Thy commandments.
11 Thy words I have hidden in my heart,
that I may not sin against Thee.

[1] 'The new and living way' (Heb. 10:19) of love (1 Cor. 12:31), peace with all (Heb. 12:14), holiness (Is. 35:8), 'the way of God' (Mt. 22:16), righteousness (2 Pet. 2:21), truth (2 Pet. 2:2), salvation (Acts 16:17), perfection (Mt. 5:48; 19:21; 1 Jn. 2:5), 'the King's Highway' (Num. 20:17), the way of life (Mt. 7:14) revealed by God Who said, 'I am the Way' (Jn. 14:6). The one law (Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:10) is the all-embracing love of God: 'Live in love, as Christ loved us' (Eph. 5:2).

[2] Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12; Lev. 18:5; Luke 10:25-28.

[3] *Testimonies* are God's works and creations through which we see and know God (Rom. 1:19-24), the Tabernacle, Ark and Mercy-Seat, the Covenant, His words and commandments, the whole Bible, the Church and Mysteries (Jn. 5:39), especially the Decalogue Laws, abiding testimonies of the Covenant, called the Testimony (Ex. 25:16; 27:21).

[4] Man has lost sight of God through sin. We are to seek Him by repentance, in truth, by prayer and fasting, in His word, for Himself alone, through His Son, and in His Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:6-26).

12 Blessed art Thou, O Lord;
teach me Thy rights.
13 With my lips I declare
all the judgments of Thy mouth.
14 I delight in the way of Thy testimonies,
as in all riches.
15 I will reflect on Thy commandments,
and consider Thy ways.
16 I will meditate on Thy rights,
and not forget Thy words.
17 Respond to Thy slave,
that I may live and keep Thy words.
18 Unveil my eyes,
and I shall discern the wonders of Thy law.
19 I am a stranger on earth;
hide not Thy commandments from me.
20 My soul longs to welcome[1]
Thy judgments at all times.
21 Thou hast rebuked the proud;[2]
cursed are they who turn from Thy commandments.
22 Take from me reproach and contempt,
for I seek Thy testimonies.
23 For rulers also sat and spoke against me;
but Thy slave meditates on Thy rights.
24 For Thy testimonies are my meditation,
and Thy rights are my counsellors.[3]
25 My soul clings to the earth;
revive me according to Thy word.
26 I confess my ways and Thou answerest me;
teach me Thy rights.
27 Make me understand the way of Thy rights,
and I will reflect on Thy wonders.

[1] He does not dare to say he wants God's judgments (cp. Ps. 53 : 3), but he longs to be so pure in heart and action that he welcomes them at all times (St. Hilary).

[2] God rebuked proud satan when he was cast from heaven, and proud man when he was banished from Eden; likewise Pharaoh, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar etc. He rebukes the proud and gives grace to the humble. The eternal law is stated in Deut. 28.

[3] Everything is a testimony, witness, word of the living God. But the chief are the Saviour's Birth, Death, Descent into Hell, Resurrection, Ascension, Gift of the Spirit, Second Coming: the 7 seals of the Book only He could open (Rev. 5 : 5).

28 My soul is drowsy with sloth;[1]
strengthen me with Thy words.
29 Remove from me the way of lying,
and by Thy law have mercy on me.
30 I have chosen the way of truth,
and have not forgotten Thy judgments.
31 I have stuck to Thy testimonies, O Lord;
put me not to shame.
32 I ran the way of Thy commandments,
when Thou didst enlarge my heart.
33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy rights,
and I will seek it continually.
34 Give me understanding and I will search out Thy law
and will keep it with my whole heart.
35 Guide me in the path of Thy commandments,
for that is what I want.
36 Incline my ear to Thy testimonies
and not to covetousness.
37 Turn away my eyes from looking at vanities;[2]
revive me in Thy way.[3]
38 Confirm the promise of Thy word to Thy slave
in the fear of Thee.[4]
39 Take away my reproach which I dread;
for Thy judgments are good.
40 Behold, I long for Thy commandments;
revive me in Thy righteousness.[3]
41 And let Thy mercy come upon me, O Lord,
Thy salvation according to Thy word.
42 And to those who taunt me I will answer
that I trust in Thy words.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
for I trust Thy judgments.
44 And I will keep Thy law continually,
for ever and to all eternity.

[1] *sloth*: *or*, accidie.

[2] Eyes were given us that we might see in creatures our Creator (St Athanasius).

[3] Christ is our way and our righteousness (cp. Jn. 14 : 6 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 30 ; Ephes. 2 : 5-7).

[4] The house of wisdom can be built only if the fear of God is rooted deeply in the soul (cp. St Ambrose).

45 And I walk in freedom
because I seek Thy commandments.
46 And I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings
and will not be ashamed.
47 And I meditate on Thy commandments,
which I love exceedingly.
48 And I lift up my hands to Thy commandments which I love,
and I meditate on Thy rights.
49 Remember Thy words to Thy slave,
by which Thou hast given me hope.
50 This comforts me in my dejection,
for Thy promise gives me life.
51 The proud are utterly outrageous,
but I do not swerve from Thy law.
52 I remember Thy judgments of old, O Lord,
and take comfort.
53 Dejection seizes me, because of sinners
who forsake Thy law.
54 Thy rights are my songs
in the place of my exile.
55 I remember Thy name, O Lord, in the night,
and keep Thy law.
56 This blessing is mine
because I seek Thy rights.
57 Thou art my portion, O Lord;
I promise to keep Thy law.
58 I implore Thy grace[1] with all my heart;
have mercy on me according to Thy word.
59 I have considered Thy ways,
and turned my feet to Thy testimonies.
60 I was ready and not slack
to obey Thy commandments.
61 The cords of sinners entangle me,
but I do not forget Thy law.
62 At midnight I rise to praise and thank Thee
for the justice of Thy judgments.
63 I am a friend of all who fear Thee
and keep Thy commandments.

[1] *Lit.* Face : a Hebraism for 'favor'. (Cp. Psalm 44 : 13).

64 The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy;[1]
teach me Thy rights.
65 Thou hast shown kindness to Thy slave, O Lord,
according to Thy word.
66 Teach me kindness, discipline and knowledge,
for I believe in Thy commandments.
67 Before I was humbled I went wrong;
so now I keep Thy word.
68 Thou art good, O Lord, and in Thy goodness
teach me Thy rights.
69 The injustice of the proud is heaped upon me,
but I will seek Thy commandments with my whole heart.
70 Their heart is curdled[2] like milk;
but I meditate on Thy law.
71 It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me,
that I may learn Thy rights.
72 The law of Thy mouth is a treasure to me
beyond thousands of gold and silver.[3]

Glory . . . . .

73 Thy hands have made me and moulded me;
give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.
74 Those who fear Thee will be glad when they see me,
because I trust in Thy words.
75 I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are just,
and that Thou hast rightly humbled me.
76 But let Thy mercy comfort me
according to Thy word to Thy slave.
77 Let Thy compassion come to me, and I shall live;
for Thy law is my meditation.
78 Let the proud be ashamed, for they unjustly injure me;
but I will meditate on Thy commandments.
79 Let those who fear Thee turn to me,
and those who know Thy testimonies.
80 Let my heart be faultless in Thy rights,
that I may not be ashamed.

[1] When Christ dwells in the heart, while others complain of poverty, want and suffering, the saints see love and mercy everywhere. 'Everything has become new' (2 Cor. 5 : 17). See also Psalms 32 : 5; 117 : 1.

[2] Curdled with scorn, anger and fear.

[3] Was St. Peter poor when he had no gold and silver for the cripple? They are not currency in Canaan (cp. St Chrysostom).

81 My soul is dying for Thy salvation;
I hope in Thy words.
82 My eyes fail with watching for Thy word,
saying: 'When wilt Thou comfort me?'[1]
83 For I have become like a wineskin in the frost;[2]
yet I have not forgotten Thy rights.
84 How many are the days of Thy slave?
When will my persecutors undergo judgment?
85 The lawless have told me fables,
but not as Thy law, O Lord.
86 All Thy commandments are truth.
They persecute me unjustly; help me!
87 They nearly made an end of me on earth;
but I have not forsaken Thy commandments.
88 In Thy mercy give me life,
and I shall obey the testimonies of Thy mouth.
89 Thy word, O Lord,
continues for ever in Heaven.
90 Thy truth is for all generations;
Thou hast founded the earth, and it continues.
91 The day continues by Thy arrangement,
for all things are Thy servants.
92 Unless Thy law had been my meditation,
I should have died in my humiliation.
93 I will never forget Thy rights,
for by them Thou hast given me life.
94 I am Thine, O save me,
for I seek Thy rights.
95 Sinners wait for me to destroy me;
I contemplate Thy testimonies.
96 I have seen the end of all perfection;
Thy commandment is exceedingly broad.[3]

[1] 'When wilt Thou comfort me?'=When wilt Thou send Thy Comforter, so that I may be filled with Thy Spirit, Comforter, Paraclete? (cp. Ephes. 5:18).

[2] Sprinkled with hoar-frost, a wineskin is like the greying head of an old man.

[3] The commandment to love God, our neighbor and our enemy, is infinitely broad because all-inclusive; it contains the sum of all our perfection, and is the crowning experience (cp. St Basil).

97 O how I love Thy law, O Lord!
It is my meditation all day long.
98 Thou hast made me wiser than my enemies by Thy command-
ment,
for it is mine for ever.
99 I have understood more than all my teachers,
because Thy testimonies are my meditation.
100 I have understood more than my elders,
because I seek Thy commandments.
101 I restrain my feet from every evil way,
that I may keep Thy words.
102 I have not shrunk from Thy judgments,
for Thou teachest me Thy law.
103 How sweet are Thy words to my heart![1]
They are sweeter than honey to my mouth.
104 From Thy commandments I get understanding;
therefore I hate all wrong ways.
105 Thy law is a lamp to my feet,
and a light to my paths.[2]
106 I have sworn and am determined
to keep Thy just judgments.
107 I have been humbled, O Lord, exceedingly;
revive me by Thy word.
108 Accept the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord;
and teach me Thy judgments.
109 My life is continually in Thy hands,
and I do not forget Thy law.
110 Sinners laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from Thy commandments.
111 Thy testimonies are my heritage for ever,
for they are the joy of my heart.
112 I have inclined my heart to do Thy rights,
for the sake of an eternal reward.
113 I hate wicked spirits,[3]
but I love Thy law.

[1] hear : *lit.* gullet, throat, larynx.
[2] 'The rays of the Word are eternally ready to shine wherever the windows of the soul are opened in simple faith' (St. Hilary).
[3] 'In wicked men we rightly hate the evil, but love the creature' (St. Prosper).

114 Thou art my helper and my protector;
I trust in Thy words.
115 Depart from me, you evil spirits,
and I will search out the commandments of my God.
116 Defend me according to Thy word, and revive me;
and let me not be disappointed in my expectation.
117 Help me and I shall be saved;
and I will meditate on Thy rights continually.
118 Thou hast rejected all who ignore Thy rights,
for their intention is wrong.
119 All the sinners of the earth I regard as outcasts;[1]
that is why I love Thy testimonies.
120 Nail down my flesh with the fear of Thee,
for I am afraid of Thy judgments.
121 I have done what is right and just;
leave me not to those who injure me.
122 Be responsible for Thy slave's welfare;[2]
do not let the proud oppress me.
123 My eyes fail in looking for Thy salvation,
and for the word of Thy righteousness.
124 Deal with Thy slave according to Thy mercy,
and teach me Thy rights.
125 I am Thy slave: give me understanding,
and I shall know Thy testimonies.
126 It is time for the Lord to act;[3]
they have defied Thy law.
127 That is why I love Thy commandments
more than gold or topaz.[4]
128 That is why I obey all Thy commandments;
every wrong way I hate.

[1] The world's real outcasts are those who deliberately exclude themselves by sin from the realm of grace and glory. Cp. Ps. 50 : 13. 'Cast me not out of Thy Presence, from a sense of Thy grace and favor, from the vision of Thy Face.' Cp. Ps. 21 : 7 ; Mt. 25 : 30 ; Jn. 15 : 6, 6 : 37.

[2] Be surety *or* bail (*Lat.* Bajulus=burden-bearer), as Judah was answerable for the welfare and safety of Benjamin (Gen. 43 : 9). Cp. Hezekiah's prayer: 'O Lord, I am oppressed. Undertake for me' (Isaiah 38 : 14).

[3] These words are repeated by the deacon at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.

[4] 'When the commandments are loved more than gold or precious stones (cp. 18 : 11), all earthly reward compared with the commandments themselves is trivial; then no other human blessings can compare with those good gifts and laws by which man himself is made good' (St. Augustine).

129 Thy testimonies are wonderful;
that is why my soul seeks them.
130 The exposition of Thy words enlightens
and instructs children.[1]
131 I open my mouth and draw in the Spirit,
for I long for Thy commandments.

Glory . . . .

132 Look upon me and have mercy on me
with the judgment of those who love Thy name.[2]
133 Direct my steps by Thy word,
and let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Redeem me from the oppression of men,
and I will keep Thy commandments.
135 Let Thy face beam on Thy slave,
and teach me Thy rights.
136 My eyes shed streams of water,
when I do not keep Thy law.
137 Righteous art Thou, O Lord,
and Thy judgments are right.
138 Thou hast strictly enjoined as Thy testimonies
righteousness and truth.
139 Thy zeal consumes me,
because my enemies forget Thy words.
140 Thy word is very pure,[3]
and Thy servant loves it.
141 Young and despised as I am,
I do not forget Thy rights.
142 Thy justice is eternal justice,
and Thy law is truth.
143 Sorrows and sufferings befall me;
Thy commandments are my meditation.[4]
144 Thy testimonies are eternal justice;
give me understanding and I shall live.

[1] Cp. Lk. 24 : 27, 32, 45.

[2] Just as we who claim to love God judge it right to show mercy, so we can expect the divine mercy (Mt. 5 : 7).

[3] pure: *lit.* burnt, fired: hence refined and pure (cp. Psalm 11 : 7).

[4] 'No athlete enters a contest unless he has first been trained. Let us anoint the arms of our soul with the oil of reading, and have regular exercise day and night in the gymnasium of Holy Scripture' (St. Ambrose).

145 I cry with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord,
I will seek Thy rights.
146 I cry to Thee; save me,
and I will keep Thy testimonies.
147 I rise at dead of night and cry;
my hope is in Thy words.
148 My eyes forestall the dawn,[1]
that I may meditate on Thy words.[2]
149 Hear my cry, Lord, in Thy mercy;
by Thy judgment grant me life.
150 Those bent on wickedness draw near me,
but they are far from Thy law.
151 Thou art near, O Lord;
and all Thy ways are truth.
152 I have known of old from Thy testimonies,
that Thou hast founded them for ever.
153 See my humility and rescue me,
for I do not forget Thy law.
154 Judge my cause and redeem me;
through Thy word grant me life.
155 Salvation is far from sinners,
for they do not seek Thy rights.
156 Many are Thy mercies, O Lord;
by Thy judgment grant me life.
157 Many are they who trouble me and persecute me;
yet I do not swerve from Thy testimonies.
158 I see senseless people and am grieved,
because they do not keep Thy words.
159 See how I love Thy commandments, O Lord!
In Thy mercy grant me life.
160 The sum[3] of Thy words is truth;
and all the judgments of Thy justice are eternal.

[1] 'It is a grim outlook if the rising sun finds you in bed weighed down with snoring sloth! You owe the daily first-fruits of your heart and voice to God. The Lord Jesus spent nights in prayer that you might learn to pray. Give Him what He paid for you.' (St. Ambrose, cp. Mk. 13:35-37).
[2] Words: Gk. *logia*=oracles, utterances, sayings, promises (cp. Rom. 3:2; Acts 7:38; Heb. 5:12; 1 Pet. 4:11). [3] Cp. Ps. 110:10.

161 Rulers persecute me without cause,
but I dread to be deaf to Thy words.[1]

162 I rejoice over Thy words
like one finding rich spoils.

163 Injustice I hate and abhor,
but I love Thy law.

164 Seven times a day I praise Thee
for the justice of Thy judgments.

165 Great peace have those who love Thy law,
and for them there is no stumbling.

166 I look for Thy salvation, O Lord,
and love Thy commandments.

167 My soul keeps Thy testimonies
and loves them exceedingly.

168 I keep Thy commandments and Thy testimonies.
for all my ways are before Thee, O Lord.

169 Let my need come before Thee, O Lord;
give me understanding according to Thy word.

170 Let my prayer enter Thy presence, O Lord;
deliver me according to Thy word.

171 Let my lips burst into song,
when Thou hast taught me Thy rights.

172 Let my tongue tell of Thy words,
for all Thy commandments are just.

173 Let Thy hand be near to save me,
for I have chosen Thy commandments.

174 I long for Thy salvation, O Lord,
and Thy law is my meditation.

175 May my soul live to praise Thee,
and may Thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy slave,
for I have not forgotten Thy commandments.

Glory . . . .

[1] 'I do not fear my enemies, but I dread to be dead to Thy word' (St. Athanasius). Cp. Psalm 80 : 12-14 and footnote there.
Cp. Rom, 6 : 11-13.

KATHISMA 18

PSALM 119

A Pilgrim Song: The Enemies of Peace
The Arrows of Love

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
To the Lord in the hour of my distress
I cry and He answers me.
2 O Lord, deliver my soul from lying lips,
and from a treacherous tongue.
3 What should be given you,
what added protection,
against a treacherous tongue?
4 The sharp arrows of the mighty warrior
with coals of desolation.[1]
5 Woe is me, that my pilgrimage is prolonged,
that I live among the tents of Kedar.
6 My soul has long been on pilgrimage
with those who hate peace.
7 I am peaceful;
but when I speak to them,
they fight me without provocation.

PSALM 120

A Pilgrim Song: The Ever-Watchful Guardian of Israel
Tunneling Mountains

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
I lift up my eyes to the mountains.[2]
Where will my help come from?
2 My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
3 Let not your foot be moved,
nor Him Who keeps you slumber.[3]

[1] Cp. Psalm 139:11; Rom. 12:20. 'Coals of hell'. For desolation as the equivalent of hell, see Mark 13:14.
[2] Cp. Jeremiah 3:23. I look through the hills to their unseen Maker.
[3] Cp. Matthew 8:24-27. 'Lord, save us, we are sinking.' Prayer rouses God to action and prevents the illusion of His being asleep.

4 Behold, He Who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord will keep you;
the Lord is your shadow at your right hand.
6 The sun will not burn you by day,
nor the moon by night.
7 May the Lord keep you from all evil;
the Lord will keep your soul.
8 The Lord will keep your coming and going,
from now and for ever.

PSALM 121

A Pilgrim Song of Love for the Holy City
Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
I was glad when they said to me:
'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'
2 Our feet are standing
in your courts, O Jerusalem.
3 Jerusalem is being built as a city
that is shared by all alike.
4 For there the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as a testimony to Israel,[1]
to thank and praise the name of the Lord.
5 For there the thrones are set for judgment,
thrones of the house of David.
6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
and abundance for those who love you.[2]
7 Peace be within your realm,
and abundance within your strongholds.
8 For the sake of my brethren and my neighbors,
I speak peace regarding you.
9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I seek your good.

[1]The law of worship requiring the triannual ascent of males to the holy mountain was a witness and acknowledgement of God's liberation of Israel, and a means of attesting their loyalty and claiming the consequent privileges of the Covenant (Deut. 16 : 16-20. Ex. 23 : 14-17).

[2]Abundance (cp. John 10 : 10). Pray for pardon and peace before the King comes as Judge with thousands of His holy ones (Lk. 14 : 32 ; Jude 14).

PSALM 122

A Pilgrim Song : The Reproach of Christ[1]
Our Eyes are on the Lord

1 *(A Song of Ascents)*
To Thee I lift up my eyes,
O Thou Who dwellest in heaven.[2]
2 As the eyes of slaves
on the hands of their lords,
as the eyes of a maid
on the hands of her mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God
till He has compassion on us.
3 Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us;
for we have had our fill to the full of scorn.
4 Our soul is more than full;
the reproach be on the prosperous
and the contempt on the proud.

PSALM 123

A Pilgrim Song of Thanksgiving to the Saviour
Our Help is in the Name of the Lord

1 *(A Song of Ascents)*
'Unless the Lord had been among us,'
(let Israel now say),
2 'unless the Lord had been among us
when men rose up against us,
3 they would have swallowed us alive,
when their fury blazed against us.
4 The water would have drowned us,
our soul would have passed through a torrent.
5 Our soul would have passed through
irresistible water.'
6 Blessed be the Lord,
Who did not give us as a prey to their teeth!

[1] Hebrews 11:26; 13:13.
[2] Heaven is here (Mt. 4:17; Lk. 17:21; Prov. 17:24).

7 Our life, like a bird, has been saved
from the snare of the hunters;
the snare has been broken and we have been saved.

8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 124

A Pilgrim Song of Faith : God our Mountain Stronghold
Conditions of Safety and Security

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion;
he who dwells in Jerusalem will never be shaken.

2 Round Jerusalem are the mountains,
and the Lord is round His people,
from now and for ever.

3 The Lord will not leave the rod of sinners
over the realm of the righteous,
lest the righteous should stretch out their hands
to wrongdoing.

4 Do good, O Lord, to the good,
and to those who are right in heart.

5 But those who turn aside into crooked ways,
the Lord will drive away with evildoers.
On Israel, peace.

PSALM 125

A Pilgrim Song : Messianic Days of Heaven on Earth
Returned Exiles Pray for the Release of Captives Still in Babylon

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion,
we were like those who are comforted.

2 Then was our mouth filled with joy,
and our tongue with exultation.
Then they said among the nations:
'The Lord has done great things for them.'

3 The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are rejoiced.
4 Bring back, O Lord, our captives
like torrents in the South.[1]
5 Those who sow in tears
will reap in joy.
6 They go, full of tears as they go,
broadcasting their seed.
But when they come home
they will come full of joy,
bringing their sheaves.

PSALM 126

A Pilgrim Song : God is All in All
Divine Grace and Guidance Indispensable

1 (*A Song of Ascents. By Solomon*)
Unless the Lord builds the house,[2]
the builders labor in vain;
unless the Lord guards the city,
the watchman keeps awake in vain.
2 It is in vain that you rise early;
you sit down, you get up again,
you eat your bread in grief,
when He has given His beloved sleep.
3 Truly sons are a gift from the Lord,
the reward of a fruitful womb.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
so are the children of the exiles.
5 Happy is he who satisfies his desire with them;
such exiles will not be ashamed or confounded
when they speak to their enemies at the gates.

[1] 'South': *Heb.* Negeb. The Negeb is dry for about 9 months, but in winter the rocky watercourses become rushing torrents.

[2] The house God builds and keeps is the temple made of living stones (1 Pet. 2:5). 'We are His house' and 'the Builder of all things is God' (Heb. 3:4-6). 'Apart from Me you can do nothing' (Jn. 15:5). The Church is God's House, Temple, City (Eph. 2:19f.; 1 Cor. 3:9-17).

PSALM 127

A Pilgrim Song : The Blessings of a Gracious Home
God Bless you to see Daily the Joys of Jerusalem

1 *(A Song of Ascents)*
Blessed are all who fear the Lord,
who walk in His ways.
2 You will eat the fruits of your labors;
blessed are you, and it will be well with you.
3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
on the sides of your house;
your children like olive shoots
round your table.
4 Behold what blessings await
the man who fears the Lord.
5 The Lord bless you from Zion
to see the joys of Jerusalem
all the days of your life,
6 and see your children's children.
On Israel, peace.

PSALM 128

A Pilgrim Song : The Gates of Hell will not Prevail
We Bless you in the Name of the Lord

1 *(A Song of Ascents)*
'Often have they warred against me from my youth,'
(let Israel now say),
2 'Often have they warred against me from my youth;
yet they could not prevail over me.
3 The sinners plowed on my back;
they prolonged their iniquity.
4 But the just Lord
breaks the sinners' necks.'
5 Let all who hate Zion
be confounded and routed.
6 Let them be like grass on the housetops
that withers before it is pulled up,
7 with which no reaper can fill his arms,
no one gathering sheaves fill his bosom.
8 And no passers-by will say to them:
'The blessing of the Lord be upon you;
we bless you in the name of the Lord.'

Glory . . . .

PSALM 129

A Pilgrim Song of Mercy and Forgiveness
Praying and Waiting for Full Redemption

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord.[1]
2 O Lord, hear my cry;
let Thy ears be attentive
to the cry of my prayer.
3 If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark our sins,
O Lord, who would survive?
4 But with Thee is forgiveness.
5 For Thy name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord;[2]
my soul waits for Thy word.
6 My soul hopes for the Lord
from the morning watch till the night;
from the morning watch
let Israel hope for the Lord.
7 For with the Lord there is mercy,
and with Him there is full redemption.
8 And He will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.[3]

PSALM 130

A Pilgrim Song: The Spirit of Humility and Childhood
Weaning is Growth in Freedom and Strength

1 (*A Song of Ascents. By David*)
O Lord, my heart is not haughty,
nor my eyes lofty;
I do not meddle with great things,
nor with marvels beyond me.

[1] We can cry from the depths only when we go down to the depths. To suffer is to live deeply. The cross is the secret of the heart-cry. Will holy God be attentive if we are not attentive ourselves? When we cry out of the depths of our need, we can be sure of the divine response (cp. Mt. 15:8).
[2] For Thy name's sake: *variant reading*, For the sake of Thy law. The law contained the word or promise of forgiveness (Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34).
[3] Cp. Titus 2:14.

2 If I am not humble-minded,
but lift up my neck,[1]
like a weaned child against its mother,
Thou wilt pay my soul back.
3 Let Israel trust in the Lord,
from now and for ever.

PSALM 131

A Pilgrim Song : The Promises of God
The Growth of Saints is the Flowering of Holiness

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)
O Lord, remember David
and all his meekness,
2 how he swore to the Lord,
and vowed to the God of Jacob:
3 'I will not enter my house,
or go under its roof,
or climb on to my bed;
4 I will give no sleep to my eyes,
no repose to my eyelids,
no rest to my temples,
5 till I find the Lord's sanctuary,[2]
the dwelling of the God of Jacob.'
6 We heard it was at Ephrata;
we found it in the woodland fields.[3]
7 Let us enter His sanctuaries;
let us bow down to the place where His feet stood.
8 Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place;
Thou and the ark of Thy holiness.
9 Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness,
and let Thy saints rejoice.
10 For Thy servant David's sake,
turn not away Thy face from Thy anointed.[4]
11 The Lord pledged His troth to David,
and will not annul it:
'One of your sons I will set on your throne.[5]

[1] Prov. 29 : 1 ; 2 Kings 17 : 14 ; Neh. 9 : 16 ; Dt. 9 : 6.
[2] sanctuary: *lit.* place. David confessed this vow to Nathan (2 Sam. 7). Cp. 'The Romans will come and destroy both our sanctuary and our nation' (Jn. 11 : 48). Christ was born at Ephrata (cp. Jn. 2 : 19).
[3] Cp. 1 Kings 6 : 21 (1 Sam. 6 : 21).
[4] Ps. 131 : 8-10=2 Chron. 6 : 41-42.
[5] 1 Chron. 17 : 11-14 ; Acts 2 : 30-33.

12 If your children keep my covenant
and these testimonies which I will teach them,
their sons also for ever will sit on your throne.'
13 For the Lord has chosen Zion;
He has selected it for His dwelling:
14 ' This is My resting-place for ever;
here I will dwell, for I have selected it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and her saints will shout for joy.
17 I will make the stock[1] of David flourish there;
I have prepared a lamp[2] for my Christ.
18 His enemies I will clothe with shame;
but in Him my holiness will blossom.

PSALM 132

A Pilgrim Song : The Blessing of Unity
The Spirit of God is Oil and Dew

1 (*A Song of Ascents. By David*)
Behold, how good and how delightful it is
when brothers dwell together in unity!
2 It is like the precious oil on the head
running down to the beard,
to Aaron's beard,
running down to the edge of his garment.
3 It is like the dew of Hermon
that descends on the mountains of Zion.[3]
For there[4] the Lord has enjoined the blessing
of eternal life.

[1] stock : *lit.* horn.
[2] lamp : 'the word of prophecy' (2 Pet. 1 : 19) culminating in St. John the Baptist, of whom Christ said, 'He was a burning and shining lamp' (Jn. 5 : 35).
[3] As oil falls first on the priest's head and then runs to the edge of his clothing, and as dew falls first on the highest mountain and then the hill of Zion, so God's blessings flow from Zion to all the land.
[4] There : 'among brothers living together in unity on Zion, for there on the holy Apostles was sent down the life-giving dew of the All-Holy Spirit, from Whom all believers reap eternal blessing' (St Athanasius).

PSALM 133

A Pilgrim Song of the Night
Intercessors Standing in the Holy Spirit

1 (*A Song of Ascents*)

Behold now bless the Lord,
all you slaves of the Lord,
who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of our God.

2 At night lift up your hands to the Holy of Holies,[1]
and bless the Lord.

3 May the Lord Who made heaven and earth
bless you out of Zion.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 19

PSALM 134

Call to Praise the Divine Name and Nature
God's Vast, Unceasing Activity beside Inert and Lifeless Idols

1 (*Alleluia*)

Praise the name of the Lord;
praise the Lord, you slaves of His,

2 you who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of our God.

3 Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good;
sing psalms to His name, for it is delightful.

4 For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself,
and Israel for His own possession.

5 For I know that the Lord is great,
and that our Lord is above all gods.

6 The Lord does whatever He likes,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and in all the deeps.

[1] A suppressed *tōn hagiōn* is to be understood here (cp. Heb. 8:2; 9:3, 8, 12, 24, 25, wrongly translated 'holy place' in R.V. etc.) In the liturgy of St Basil and in the church services God is addressed as the 'Holy of Holies.' (1 Tim. 2:8).

7 He brings up clouds from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightnings bring the rain;
He brings winds out of His storehouses.

8 He struck the firstborn of Egypt,
man and beast alike.

9 He sent signs and wonders
in your midst, O Egypt,
against Pharaoh and all his servants.

10 He struck many nations
and slew mighty kings:

11 Sehon, king of the Amorites,
and Og, king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan.

12 And He gave their land as a heritage,
a possession to His people Israel.[1]

13 O Lord, Thy name continues for ever,
Thy fame from generation to generation.

14 For the Lord will judge His people
and have compassion on His servants.[2]

15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the works of men's hands.

16 They have mouths, yet cannot speak.
they have eyes, yet cannot see.

17 They have ears, yet cannot hear;
never a breath is in their mouths.

18 Let those who make them be like them,
and all who trust in them.

19 Bless the Lord, O house of Israel:
bless the Lord, O house of Aaron!

20 Bless the Lord, O house of Levi;
you who fear the Lord, bless the Lord!

21 Blessed be the Lord from Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem.

[1] 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ' (Rev. 11 : 15).
[2] Deut. 32 : 36.

PSALM 135

Song of Thanksgiving to the Good God: For Responsive Chanting[1]
The Crowning Wonder: The Bread of Life

1 (*Alleluia*)
Give thanks to the Lord, He is good;
His mercy[2] is eternal.
2 Give thanks to the God of gods;
His mercy is eternal.
3 Give thanks to the Lord of Lords;
His mercy is eternal.
4 To Him who alone does great wonders;
His mercy is eternal.
5 To Him Who made the heavens in wisdom;
His mercy is eternal.
6 To Him Who poised the earth on the waters;
His mercy is eternal.
7 To Him Who alone made the great lights;
His mercy is eternal.
8 The sun to rule the day;
His mercy is eternal.
9 The moon and the stars to rule the night;
His mercy is eternal.
10 Who struck Egypt with their firstborn;
His mercy is eternal.
11 And brought out Israel from among them;
His mercy is eternal.
12 With a strong hand and a high arm;
His mercy is eternal.
13 To Him Who divided the Red Sea in two;
His mercy is eternal.
14 And led Israel through the midst of it;
His mercy is eternal.
15 But shook off Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;
His mercy is eternal.
16 To Him Who led His people in the wilderness;
His mercy is eternal.

[1] This Psalm is called 'The Great Hallel' or Hymn of Praise in the Talmud, and is still used by the Jewish people in their daily worship.
[2] mercy: *or* love, Cp. Lk. 10:37.

17 To Him Who struck great kings;
His mercy is eternal.
18 And slew mighty kings;
His mercy is eternal.
19 Sehon, King of the Amorites;
His mercy is eternal.
20 And Og, King of Bashan;
His mercy is eternal.
21 And gave their land as a heritage;
His mercy is eternal.
22 A possession to His servant Israel.
His mercy is eternal.
23 For the Lord remembers us in our abasement;
His mercy is eternal.
24 And redeems us from our enemies;
His mercy is eternal.
25 Who gives food to all flesh;
His mercy is eternal.
26 O give thanks to the God of Heaven;
His mercy is eternal.

PSALM 136

Song of the Babylonian Exile
The Unsung Song of the Heart

1 By the rivers of Babylon
we sat down and wept
when we remembered Zion.[1]
2 On the willows in Babylon
we hung up our instruments.
3 For there our captors asked us for songs
and our abductors called for a tune, saying:
'Sing us some of the songs of Zion.'
4 How can we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand be forgotten.

[1] Jerusalem and Zion are types of the Church, the bride of Christ. 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her' (Ephes. 5 : 25f.).

6 May my tongue stick in my throat
if I do not remember you,
if I do not put Jerusalem first[1]
as above all my joy.

7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom
the day of the fall of Jerusalem, when they said:
'Down with it, down with it, to its very foundations!'

8 O daughter of Babylon the wretched!
Blessed is he who repays you for what you did to us.
Blessed is he who seizes your children
and dashes them against the rock.[2]

Glory....

PSALM 137

Thanksgiving to God for Answering Prayer
Great is the Word, Promise, Name and Glory of God

1 (*By David*)
I will praise and thank Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart,[3]
and in the presence of the Angels I will sing to Thee;
for Thou hearest all the words of my mouth.

2 I will bow down towards Thy holy temple
and praise Thy name for Thy mercy and truth,
for Thou hast magnified Thy holy name above every name.[4]

3 On the day when I call upon Thee, answer me speedily;
Thou wilt strengthen me with Thy power in my soul.

4 May all the kings of the earth acknowledge Thee, O Lord;
for they have heard all the words of Thy mouth.

5 And let them sing among the songs[5] of the Lord:
'Great is the glory of the Lord.'

[1] See footnote on page 170.

[2] Babylon signifies the flesh. Blessed is he who subdues it with fasts and deprives it of joys, as it dealt with the soul, and who dashes incipient evil thoughts, while still weak, against the Rock which is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4; Mt. 21:44; Rev. 18).

[3] *heart*: 'My whole heart I lay on the altar of Thy praise, a sacrifice of praise I offer to Thee. May the flame of Thy love set on fire my whole heart; may nothing in me be left to me, nothing in which I can look to myself, but may I wholly burn with Thee, be wholly on fire, wholly love Thee, as though set aflame by Thee' (St Augustine).

[4] Cp. Phil. 2:9-11. *Heb.* Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name.

[5] songs: *variant reading and Slavonic*: ways.

6 For the Lord is high, yet He regards the humble;
but the proud and haughty He knows from afar.
7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
Thou givest me life.
Against the wrath of my enemies
Thou dost stretch out Thy hand,
and Thy right hand saves me.
8 The Lord will repay for me.
O Lord, Thy mercy is eternal;
despise not the works of Thy hands.

PSALM 138

The Presence of God and His Knowledge of Man
Thy Right Hand will Hold Me

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
O, Lord, Thou hast proved me and known me.
2 Thou knowest my resting and my rising;
Thou canst read my thoughts from afar.
3 Thou hast tracked my path and my life
and hast foreseen all my ways.
4 There is no deceiving Thee with my tongue,
5 for Thou, O Lord, knowest everything
from beginning to end.
Thou hast created me and laid Thy hand on me.
6 Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me;
too great—I cannot attain to it.
7 Where can I go from Thy Spirit,
and where can I escape from Thy presence?[1]
8 If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there;
if I descend to hell, Thou art present.
9 If I wing my flight to the sunrise
and dwell in the utmost bounds of the sea,
10 even there Thy hand will guide me
and Thy right hand will hold me.
11 And I said: 'Surely darkness will hide me
and night be the only light in my pleasure.'
12 But darkness is not dark to Thee,
and night is as light as day;
to Thee darkness and light are alike.

[1] The Spirit of the Lord fills the world (Wisdom 1:7).

13 Thou hast created my heart,[1] O Lord;
Thou hast sustained me from my mother's womb.
14 I praise and thank Thee
for the dread wonder of Thy presence;
wonderful are Thy works too, as my soul well knows.
15 No bone of mine is hidden from Thee,
though made in secret with my substance
in earth's underworld.
16 Thy eyes beheld my unformed state,
and in Thy book all men are written;
day by day they are formed,
when as yet there are none of them.
17 But to me Thy friends are very precious, O God;
very strong are their principles.
18 Should I count them, they would be more than the sand.
I rise and I am still with Thee.
19 If only Thou wouldst slay sinners, O God!
Begone from me, you men of blood,
20 for you are wranglers in your thoughts.
They take Thy cities for vanities.
21 Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord,
and do I not burn with rage at Thy enemies?
22 With perfect hatred I hate them;
I count them my own enemies.
23 Try me, O God, and know my heart;
examine me and know my ways.
24 And see if there is any wrong way in me,
and guide me in the way of life eternal.

PSALM 139

A Prayer of Faith and Trust under Persecution
Trouble gives Occasion for a Song[2]

1 *(A Psalm by David)*
2 Rescue me, O Lord, from evil men;
deliver me from wicked men,
3 who plan wrongdoing in their hearts;
all day long they are stirring up wars.

[1] heart: *lit.* kidneys (seat of the affections in Hebrew thought).
[2] 'He gives songs in the night' (Job. 35 : 10).

4 They make their tongue sharp as an adder's;
the venom of vipers is under their lips. (*Pause*)
5 Guard me, O Lord, from the hands of sinners;
rescue me from wicked men
who scheme to trip my steps.
6 The proud hide a trap for me
and stretch cords as snares for my feet;
they set stumbling-blocks across my path. (*Pause*)
7 I said to the Lord: 'Thou art my God.'
Give ear, O Lord, to the cry of my prayer.
8 O Lord, Lord, power of my salvation,
Thou overshadowest my head in the day of battle.
9 Do not abandon me to sinners,
O Lord, through my desire.
They scheme against me;
leave me not, lest they be uplifted. (*Pause*)
10 As for the heads of those who surround me,
the work of their own lips will bury them.
11 Coals will fall on them;
Thou wilt cast them into the fire,
into miseries they cannot bear.
12 A long-tongued man will not prosper in the land;
evils will hunt wicked men to their destruction.
13 I know that the Lord maintains the cause of the poor
and the rights of the needy.
14 Truly the righteous will praise Thy name;
honest men will live in Thy presence.

Glory....

PSALM 140

Evening Prayer: My Eyes Look to Thee
The Cry of Desire in the Temple of the Heart

1 (*A Psalm by David*)
Lord, I cry to Thee, hear me;
attend to the voice of my prayer when I cry to Thee.
2 Let my prayer go straight to Thee like incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.
3 Set a watch, O Lord, over my mouth,
and a strong door across my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to evil words
to make excuses for my sins
with folk whose work is lawlessness,
and I will not join their choice society.
5 A just man will strike and correct me with mercy,
but may the oil of sinners never anoint my head,
for my prayer is ever against their pleasures.
6 Their leaders and judges drown clinging to rocks.
Men will hear my words, for they are sweet.
7 As clods of earth are crushed on the ground,
our bones are scattered beside the grave.
8 O Lord, Lord, my eyes look to Thee;
in Thee I trust; reject not my soul.
9 Keep me from the snare they have laid for me,
and from the stumbling-blocks of evildoers.
10 Sinners will fall into their own net;
I am apart until I pass on.[1]

PSALM 141

Prayer for Deliverance to Join the Exultant Throng of Saints
Free my Soul from the Prison of Sin to Praise Thy Name.

1 (*Of contemplation. By David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.*)
2 I cry to the Lord with all my voice,
I pray with all my voice to the Lord.
3 I pour out my prayer before Him;
I tell my trouble in His presence.
4 When my spirit departs from me,
Thou knowest my paths.
In this way that I am going[2]
they hide a snare for me.
5 I look to the right and see:
No one notices me;
flight is cut off from me,
but there is no one seeking my life.

[1] Jesus trod the winepress alone (Is. 63). 'I (Christ) am alone, with no one to help or understand, till I pass over, till that Passover comes, when I shall depart from the world to my Father' (St. Augustine). A Christian 'keeps himself apart from the world and walks for ever with God alone' (St. Symeon the New Theologian), in isolation from sin and idols (1 Jn. 5 : 21).
[2] this way: the confession of Christ (2 Tim. 3 : 12).

6 I cry to Thee, O Lord,
and say: Thou art my hope,
my portion in the land of the living.
7 Attend to my prayer,
for I am brought very low;
deliver me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.
8 Bring my soul out of prison,
that I may praise Thy name;
the righteous are waiting for me,
until Thou reward me.

PSALM 142

Hands of Love Outstretched on the Cross
No one is Righteous in Thy Sight

1 (*A Psalm by David, when his son Absalom was pursuing him*)

Lord, hear my prayer;
give ear to my petition in Thy truth.
Hear me in Thy justice.
2 And enter not into judgment with Thy slave,
for in Thy sight no living soul can be justified.
3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul,
he has humbled my life to the earth;
he has made me dwell in darkness,
like the dead of long ago.[1]
4 And my spirit desponds within me,
and my heart within me is troubled.
5 I remember the days of old,
I meditate on all Thy works,
I meditate on the works of Thy hands.
6 I stretch out my hands to Thee;
my soul like parched earth thirsts for Thee. (*Pause*)
7 Hear me speedily, O Lord;
my spirit grows faint.
Hide not Thy face from me
lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

[1] These two lines are identical with Lamentations 3 : 6.

8 Make me hear Thy mercy in the morning,
for in Thee I have hoped.
Make known to me the way I should go, O Lord,
for I lift up my soul to Thee.

9 Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies;
I fly for refuge to Thee.

10 Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God;
Thy good Spirit will guide me to the right land.

11 Thou wilt quicken me, O Lord, for the glory of Thy Name.
In Thy justice Thou wilt bring my soul out of trouble.

12 And in Thy mercy Thou wilt slay my enemies,
and destroy all who afflict my soul,
for I am Thy slave.

Glory . . . .

KATHISMA 20

PSALM 143

New Song of Praise to God Who Gives Victory to Kings
God not Affluence is our Happiness

1 (*By David. On Goliath*)
Blessed be the Lord my God,
Who trains my hands for war
and my fingers for battle:

2 my mercy and my refuge,
my support and my deliverer,
my protection in whom I trust,
Who subdues my people under me.

3 Lord, what is man
that Thou makest Thyself known to him,
or the son of man
that Thou thinkest of him?

4 Man has become like vanity;
his days are like a passing shadow.

5 O Lord, bow the heavens and come down;
touch the mountains and they will smoke.

6 Flash lightning and Thou wilt scatter them;
shoot Thy arrows and Thou wilt confound them.

7 Send out Thy hand from on high;
rescue me and deliver me from many waters,
from the hand of aliens,
8 whose mouths talk vanity,
and whose right hand is raised in perjury.[1]
9 O God, I will sing Thee a new song;
on a ten-stringed harp I will sing praises to Thee,
10 Who givest salvation to kings,
Who didst redeem David Thy servant from the evil sword.[2]
11 Rescue me and deliver me
from the hand of aliens,[3]
whose mouths talk vanity
and whose right hand is raised in perjury:
12 whose sons are like plants
grown up when young,
their daughters decked and daubed
like a temple image;
13 their garners full to overflowing
with all manner of stores;
their flocks prolific,
teeming in their streets.
14 Their cattle are fat.
There is no fallen-down fence, no breaking out,
no wailing in their streets.
They call people blessed who have these things!
Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.

PSALM 144

Praise of the King Messiah and His Glorious Kingdom
The Lord keeps all who Love Him

1 (*Praise. By David*)
I will lift Thee on high, my God and my King,[4]
and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever.
2 Every day I will bless Thee;
and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever.

[1] Cp. Rev. 10:5; Ezek. 20:23, 28, 42; Deut. 32:14.
[2] evil sword: *or* sword of an evil man (Title indicates Goliath). It can also mean 'the sword of judgment' (2 Chron. 20:9). War is evil (Jas. 4; Mt. 5:9).
[3] 'It seems to me the Prophet means people estranged from God and alienated from the truth, whose lives are full of bad habits, who love falsehood, and who talk a lot of nonsense' (St. John Chrysostom).
[4] Cp. 'If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Me' (Jn. 12:32). See also Psalm 45:11 and the note there.

3 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
and of His greatness there is no end.

4 Generation after generation will praise Thy works
and will declare Thy power.

5 They will speak of the glorious majesty of Thy holiness,
and will tell of Thy wonders.

6 They will proclaim the power of Thy terrible acts,
and tell of Thy greatness.

7 They will spread the fame of Thy abundant goodness,
and will rejoice in Thy justice and righteousness.

8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
long-suffering and of great mercy.

9 The Lord is good and kind to all,
and His mercies are over all His works.

10 Let all Thy works praise Thee, O Lord,
and let Thy saints bless Thee.

11 They speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom,
and talk of Thy power;

12 to make known to the sons of men Thy power,
and the glorious majesty on Thy Kingdom.

13 Thy Kingdom is a Kingdom of all ages,
and Thy dominion endures throughout all generations.

14 The Lord is faithful in all His words,
and holy in all His works.

15 The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and straightens all who are bent down.

16 The eyes of all look to Thee,
and Thou givest them their food in due season.

17 Thou openest Thy hand,
and fillest with delight every living being.

18 The Lord is just in all His ways,
and holy in all His works.

19 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,
to all who call upon Him in truth.

20 He will do the will of those who fear Him
and will hear their prayer and save them.

21 The Lord keeps all who love Him,
and all the sinners He will destroy.

22 My mouth will declare the praise of the Lord;
and let all flesh[1] bless His holy name for ever and ever.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 145

Life is Praise
The Lord Straightens the Bent and Crooked

1 (*Alleluia. By Haggai and Zachariah*)
Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 I will praise the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.[2]

3 Put not your trust in rulers,
in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation.

4 Man's spirit departs and returns to its earth;
on that day all his projects perish.

5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,

6 Who made heaven and earth,
the sea and all that is in them,
Who keeps troth for ever;

7 Who administers judgment for those who are wronged,
Who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord releases those who are bound.

8 The Lord makes wise the blind;
the Lord straightens those who are bent down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord protects strangers;
He supports the orphan and the widow,
and wipes out the way of sinners.

10 The Lord will reign for ever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.

[1] 'Not all flesh is the same flesh, but men are one kind, beasts another, fish another, birds another' (1 Cor. 15:39). Cp. Psalm 148:10.
[2] Cp. Ps. 145:2 with Ps. 103:33. Only verbs differ.

PSALM 146

Builder of the City and Gatherer of His Scattered Children
God Delights in the Love of Those Who Trust and Obey Him

1 (*Alleluia. By Haggai and Zachariah*)
Praise the Lord, for singing praise is good;
may our praise delight our God.
2 The Lord is building Jerusalem,
and is gathering the dispersed of Israel.[1]
3 He heals the heartbroken,
and binds up their wounds.
4 He determines the galaxy of stars,
and calls them all by their names.
5 Great is our Lord and great is His power,
and infinite is His understanding.
6 The Lord lifts up the meek,
and humbles sinners to the ground.
7 Begin by thanking and praising the Lord;
sing praises to our God on the harp:
8 Who covers heaven with clouds,
Who prepares rain for the earth,
Who makes grass grow on the mountains,
and plants for the service of men:
9 Who gives the beasts their food,
and feeds the young ravens that call upon Him.
10 He takes no pleasure in the strength of a horse,
nor delights in a person's legs.
11 The Lord delights in those who fear Him,
and in all who trust in His mercy.

PSALM 147

God's Providential Care of His People
He Reveals His Will for the World through Israel

1 (*Alleluia. By Haggai and Zachariah*)
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
2 For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;
He has blessed your children within you.

[1] *Lit.* 'dispersions'. Cp. Mt. 24:31.

3 He makes peace on your borders,
and feeds you with the finest wheat.
4 He sends His command to the earth;
His word runs swiftly.
5 He showers snow like wool;
He scatters mist like ashes.
6 He rains His hail like crumbs;
Who can stand before His cold?
7 He sends His word and melts ice and snow;
He blows His breath and the waters flow.
8 He made known His word to Jacob,
His rights and judgments to Israel.
9 He has not dealt like this with any other nation,
nor made His judgments known to them.

Glory . . . .

PSALM 148

Cosmic Chorus of Praise
Natural Law is God's Iron Rod

1 (*Alleluia. By Haggai and Zachariah*)
Praise the Lord in Heaven,
praise Him in the heights.
2 Praise Him, all you Angels of His,
praise Him, all His Hosts.
3 Praise Him, sun and moon;
praise Him, all you stars and light.
4 Praise Him, you heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the Lord;
for He spoke and they were made,
He commanded and they were created.
6 He has set them there throughout the ages;
He has made a law, and it cannot be bypassed.[1]
7 Praise the Lord on earth,
you monsters and all deeps.
8 Fire, hail, snow and ice,
the storm-wind, all obeying His word.
9 All you mountains and hills,
all you fruit-trees and cedars.

[1] 'a law'. Cp. Jeremiah 31 (38) : 36, 37. Break Life's laws and you strike and break yourself with an iron rod (Rev. 19 : 15; Ps. 2 : 9; Jer. 2 : 9; Prov. 1 : 10-19).

10 All you wild beasts and cattle,
reptiles and winged birds.
11 All you kings and peoples of the earth,
all you rulers and judges.
12 Young men and virgins,
old men and children;
13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for His name only is supreme.
His praise is above heaven and earth.
14 He will raise His people to power.
A song for all His saints,
for the children of Israel,
for a people drawing near to Him.

PSALM 149

Triumphal Song of the Redeemed
Weapons of World Conquest: Prayer and Praise

1 (*Alleluia*)
O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing His praise in the Church of the saints.
2 Let Israel rejoice in Him Who made him,
and let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.
3 Let them praise His Name with a dance,
and sing praises to Him with tambour and harp.
4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people,
and will exalt the humble with salvation.
5 The saints will exult in glory,
and will rejoice on their beds.
6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouths,
and a two-edged sword in their hands;[1]
7 to pass judgment on the nations,
and give rebukes to the peoples;
8 to bind their kings with chains,
and their nobles with fetters of iron:
9 to pass judgment on them as God has written.
This glory is for all His saints.[2]

[1] two-edged sword: praise which conquers Amalek (St. Chrysostom).
[2] 'Holiness of life is the mother of glory' (St Theodoret).

PSALM 150

Crowning Outburst of Praise
Last Call to Praise God with Every Breath

1 (*Alleluia*)
O praise God in His saints,
praise Him in the expanse of His power.
2 Praise Him for His mighty acts,
praise Him for the greatness of His majesty.
3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet,
praise Him with psaltery and harp.
4 Praise Him with drum and dance,
praise Him with strings and bells.
5 Praise Him with tuneful cymbals,
praise Him with cymbals of victory.
6 Let every breath praise the Lord.

Glory . . . .

THIS PSALM IS NEVER READ IN CHURCH
PSALM 151

1 (*This Psalm in his own handwriting was written by David when he fought in single combat with Goliath*)
I was the smallest of my brothers,
and the youngest in my father's house;
I tended my father's sheep.
2 My hands made a musical instrument,
and my fingers tuned a psaltery.
3 But who will tell my Lord?
My Lord Himself hears.
4 He sent His angel
and took me from my father's sheep
and anointed me with the oil of His unction.
5 My brothers were tall and handsome,
but the Lord took no delight in them.
6 I went out to meet the Philistine,
and he cursed me by his idols.
7 But I drew his own sword and beheaded him,
and removed reproach from the sons of Israel.